

Along the Coast at Midnight

**A One-Round Multi-Rank SHADOWLANDS Adventure
for Heroes of Rokugan (Champions of the Emerald
Empire)**

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A lonely castle in the mountains, besieged by the forces of shadow, harbors the future hopes of a free Crab clan.

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A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing this game. The actual playing time should be about three and a half hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

GM's Information

THIS SCENARIO SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD! Please read the scenario thoroughly before attempting to run it.

This adventure is a Multi-Rank adventure. This means that it has two sets of statistics for NPCs, one for low-end parties (Ranks 1, 2, and 3) and one for mid/high-end parties (Ranks 2 through 5).

All bulleted information is just that, pure information. Feed it to the players through an NPC when appropriate. Sometimes, reading it straight just doesn't sound right.

The world of Rokugan is a cross between feudal Japan and China. It is set in an age of honorable samurai, serving their Lords (Daimyos) and Empire. Remember that family names come before personal names. Akodo Toturi is from the Akodo family and his personal name is Toturi.

A note on female designations: If a samurai has the designation of -ko, then the samurai is a female. For example, if you see Samurai-ko, then this denotes a female samurai.

A note on commerce in Rokugan: Samurai are not supposed to care about worldly possessions, especially money. A samurai pays a commoner as if the money is meaningless, a concession to the commoner's silly needs. Between samurai, the exchange of money and merchandise is an exchange of "gifts."

Glory and Honor Awards and Penalties

This adventure contains suggested Glory and Honor awards (and penalties) for dealing with the challenges presented herein. However, at times the players may take extra actions which the GM judges worthy of additional reward – or punishment. The following may be considered as guidelines:

- Performing an act of selfless, sacrificial loyalty to one's daimyo or clan: +1 point of Honor.
- Abiding by the tenets of bushido when one could gain an obvious advantage from breaking them: +1 point of Honor.
- Betraying or disobeying your duty, Clan, or family: lose 1-10 points of Honor and Glory, depending on the severity of the failure.
- Crying out in pain when injured: lose one point each of Honor and Glory.
- Using sneaky, underhanded, or treacherous methods when at an Honor rank higher than zero: lose 1-5 points of Honor.
- Using poison: lose 1-10 points of Honor, depending on the circumstances (there is always an Honor loss for using poison).
- Performing a socially acceptable public act of extreme courage and skill: +1 point of Glory.
- Drunk, insulting, or otherwise ill-mannered in public: lose 1-5 points of Glory.
- Made ronin: Glory drops to zero.

Adjusting for Party Strength

This is a Multi-Rank adventure, and contains two sets of statistics for the villains: one for Low-End parties (School ranks 1-3, average 2) and one for High-End parties (School ranks 2-5, average 3.5).

The Skill and Trait roll TNs listed in the module are for high-end parties. For a low-end party, reduce the TNs by 5.

The GM may need to make additional "tweaks" for parties which lie at an extreme end of the power curve. Suggested tweaks are listed below:

Low End Party (most/all characters Rank One):

- Reduce by two the number of Corrupted Crab Bushi in any final assault on Shiro Yasuki Yoroi.
- Hida O-Ushi's arm is not broken, although she is still wounded.
- The dog-beasts will flee if they take more than 10 points of damage from jade, rather than 15.

High End Party (average party Insight Rank is Four or higher):

- Add one additional dog-beast to the pack at Shiro Yasuki Yoro.
- All of the Corrupted Crab (the Bushi, Kuni Satsujin, and Yasuki Nokatsu) have the Shadowlands Gift of **Beyond the Elements** (all non-*maho* spells are at +10 TN to target them).

Adventure Summary and Background

For a year and a half, a civil war has raged within the Crab Clan, pitting Hida Sukune's "rebels" against Hida Kisada's "loyalists" and their Shadowlands allies. Sukune and his sister O-Ushi have struggled to win allies among the other Clans, but the war and chaos elsewhere in the Empire have hampered their efforts, and only modest help has been forthcoming. Meanwhile, Kisada's determination to crush the rebellion has led him farther down the dark path of alliance with the Shadowlands... to a grim fate which remains, for now, unknown to all.

Now the war has entered its final phase, as Kisada prepares to crush his disloyal son for good. The "loyalists" smashed the rebels in a late-spring battle, and laid siege to their stronghold at Razor of the Dawn Castle. Sukune, ill for over a year, is now dying of consumption and fever. He has persuaded his sister, Hida O-Ushi, to take her newborn son and flee to the coastal Yasuki lands, where the Mantis hold sway. He hopes she can escape and preserve the bloodline of the Hida from their father and his minions. He has also entrusted her with Hida Jikutsu, the bearer of the Jade Hand, a sacred relic of the Crab Clan.

The corrupted rulers of the Crab Clan are determined not to let O-Ushi escape, and pursue her with a large force led by none other than her eldest brother, Hida Yakamo. Yakamo has been deeply corrupted by a foul *maho* ritual, and his soul is lost to Jigoku.

But all is not yet doomed. Sukune, hoping to help his sister, has dispatched a few of his faithful followers to rally samurai from across the Empire. The Daidoji Trading Council, which has been secretly funneling aid and supplies to him, is able to smuggle out a few groups of bushi through its underground networks. Sukune hopes these men will be able to assemble help, meet with O-Ushi, and ensure her escape. The PCs will be among those approached for this task. With luck, they will be able to rescue O-Ushi and the Jade Hand

from the vengeful pursuit of Kuni Yori and Hida Yakamo.

Player's Introduction

The streets of Jukami Mura are desolate as the filthy squall that has soaked the Crane coastline sputters through its thirteenth day. It is a cold, driving rain, the kind that seems to serve no purpose other than to soak the firewood.

You have spent the dreary afternoon in a moderately-sized inn of good reputation. A meal of smoked fish, candied fruit and sake warms the body on a cold day.

PCs who have played the adventures *A Mantis and His Rat* or *Drawing Out the Darkness* have been in this city before. Jukami Mura, known as the "port which never sleeps," is a major trade center in southern Rokugan. The city is ruled by the Daidoji, but both the Mantis and the Crab Clan have significant trade interests there as well. Now, with Kyuden Doji blockaded by the Daidoji themselves, Jukami Mura and the other southern port cities are busier and more important than ever.

The PCs are most likely in this city for reasons of diplomacy and trade negotiations – with much of the Empire at war, such matters are more important than ever. Crane, Phoenix, and Lion PCs are probably discussing arrangements for supplies to their armies in the north, while Dragon and Scorpion PCs are probably trying to disrupt the same. Unicorn and Mantis PCs are working on expanding their trade with the Crane. Crab "rebel" PCs are most likely trying to disrupt any negotiations between the Crane and the Crab "loyalists," while "loyalist" PCs are doing the opposite. (Neutral Crabs are probably just trying to get back down the coast to their own lands.) Ronin PCs are, as usual, looking for work – Jukami Mura is a major center for wave-men, and headquarters for several prominent ronin bands, so ronin PCs have plenty of reason to visit.

Chronologically, this adventure takes place in late spring/early summer, and the PCs have most likely just gone through the adventures *Fires of Retribution*, *Faith in My Clan*, or *Blood of Midnight*. All of these adventures end with the PCs at "loose ends" and awaiting new orders from their superiors. In particular, *Blood of Midnight* ends with the PCs fleeing Kyuden Doji, and Jukami Mura would be a reasonable place for them to end up afterward. If none of these situations apply, the GM should work with the PCs to develop reasons for them to be in the city.

Regardless of why they originally came to the city, the PCs are now at loose ends – their negotiations (if any) are completed, ronin PCs have been unable to find work, and only the dreary weather and bad roads have prevented them from leaving. The GM should allow them a chance here to role-play and introduce themselves. (The GM should also make special note of any Crab PCs who are “loyalists,” since this adventure will offer them a chance to change their position.)

The other guests at the Inn are mostly Cranes but also include a scattering of Lion, Unicorn, Mantis, and Phoenix, as well as many commoner merchants and a few ronin. The following topics of conversation will be favored:

- The “Northern War” between the Dragon, Phoenix, and Lion has escalated with the recent battle at Jurojin Seido. However, there are rumors that the Mirumoto family’s warlike ruler, Yukihera, has been deposed, although none can confirm this.
- Stories and rumors continue to circulate about the status of Kyuden Doji and its rulers. Some stories claim the city has been stricken by plague, while others say it has been corrupted by the Shadowlands Taint.
- News is leaking out of the Crab territories that the “rebels” have been defeated and are besieged in Razor of the Dawn Castle.
- The Scorpion Clan continues to besiege the Lion city of Kenson Gakka. The Lion armies are tied down fighting the Dragon, and have been unable to relieve the city.
- The Unicorn Clan has launched an offensive to retake its northeastern territories from the Dragon.

The Messengers

The doors to the inn opens to admit four samurai, their faces hidden beneath straw hats, their clothes spattered with mud. They tip back their hats and begin stamping mud off their sandals as they rack their weapons. The tallest calls loudly for hot sake.

The identity of the samurai is not readily apparent, but a PC who rolls **Heraldry/Perception** at TN 15 recognizes the Crab mons on the hilts of three of their swords as they put them in the weapons closet. If the roll is TN 25 or better, the PC also notices tattoos on

the wrists of the fourth man, the one with unmarked swords: the mon of the Daidoji family. After hurriedly gulping down some steaming-hot sake, the quartet will head for the baths (unless a PC speaks with them beforehand).

Hida Tobashi, the leader of the group, is the prototypical Crab: large, courageous, blunt-spoken, and somewhat lacking in social graces. He trusts his three companions implicitly and will hear no ill spoken of any of them.

Daidoji Takazara is Tobashi’s ally and guide from the Trading Council – it is he who smuggled this group out through the hazardous lands north of Crab territory, skirting the Shinomen Forest, before cutting eastward to the coast. He is a cautious and soft-spoken man, and prefers to keep in the background, letting the Crab take the lead.

Hiruma Hoshiro is a young scout (age 17) from the Hiruma family. He is slim and athletic, and quite handsome when he is cleaned up, although the filth and weariness of travel somewhat obscures this at the moment. Hoshiro seems to be a brave and sincere youth, his eyes darkened by seeing too many horrors at a young age. He is quite protective of his “younger brother” Hiruma Hitaka (see below).

“**Hiruma Hitaka**” appears to be a skinny boy in his mid-teens, barely past gempukku, and wears a scroll-satchel alongside his swords. He is supposedly Hiruma Hoshiro’s younger brother, and shares his elder sibling’s youthful good looks. “Hitaka” claims to be a Kuni-trained shugenja, and expresses bitterness at the “treason” of Kuni Yori. In actuality, he is Kuni Tsutake, a Tainted and corrupted apprentice of Kuni Yori, who has used the Shadowlands power of *Blood Domination* to control Hoshiro’s mind and infiltrate the Crab rebels.

Hoshiro is thoroughly convinced that “Hitaka” is his younger brother, and will defend his “oni-chan” to the death. (In actuality, Hoshiro has no living brothers.)

Tsutake’s spells and Shadowlands powers are described in detail in Appendix #2: Villains. Unless the PCs are extraordinarily paranoid, it is unlikely that they will unmask him here – his Taint is +15 TN to detect.

The Crab Seek Help

If the PCs do not immediately approach the Crab party, they will head for the bathhouse. They return about twenty minutes later, freshly scrubbed and dressed in

clean (but damp) clothing. The two young Hiruma will attract a certain amount of fan-fluttering attention from any unattached females in the room. After an awkward pause, Hida Tobashi steps to the front, clears his throat, and addresses the room in a booming voice.

“I have come here on behalf of my lord, Hida Sukune-sama, and his honorable sister the lady Hida O-Ushi-sama, the true lords of the Crab Clan. Their need is dire, and they seek the aid of those who owe their safety and liberty to the sacrifices made by our people. The task is dangerous. Who here has the courage to help us in our hour of need?”

This bold proclamation is met by embarrassed silence from the room. Tobashi looks around with a bleak expression, obviously unsurprised by the lack of response. He and his comrades quietly seat themselves in a corner, eating a hasty meal before preparing to go back on the road.

The PCs are, of course, free to approach the Crab at any time. If they do, Hida Tobashi will perk up hopefully (especially if there are any Crab or Daidoji PCs) and, given the chance, explain his mission.

The Crab Mission

“Our lord Hida Sukune-sama has ordered his sister, lady Hida O-Ushi to take her infant son and flee the wrath of their father.” He grimaces, unwilling to speak the name of the Clan Champion. ***“Hida Sukune-sama is ill, perhaps dying, and his army is besieged. It is his hope that his sister and the Hida heir can escape to the Yasuki lands on the coast. He dispatched us with the help of... certain allies,”*** he shoots a sidelong glance at Daidoji Takazara, ***“to seek help from outside the Clan.”***

If the PCs show interest in helping, the Crab will share additional information:

- Hida Sukune staged a diversionary attack to enable O-Ushi to slip out of Razor of the Dawn Castle. She planned to strike for the coast and the city of Sunda Mizu Mura, currently occupied by the Mantis. The trip was expected to take about three weeks, of which two have already passed.
- If the PCs ask why O-Ushi was not smuggled out by the Daidoji in the same manner as Tobashi and his comrades, he sighs. “We were in a secondary castle, Face of the East near the northern border. The enemy has cut communications between us

and Razor of the Dawn. A ratling was able to smuggle us word of Lord Sukune-sama’s plans.”

- They expect that O-Ushi will be closely pursued by Kisada’s forces, and do not know if she can reach Sunda Mizu Mura on her own. Their orders are to collect allies, take them to the city, then try to rendezvous with O-Ushi and make sure she (and her son) get out safely.
- Sunda Mizu Mura’s status is uncertain – the city, and the neighboring Yasuki territories, have been occupied for months by the Mantis Clan and its allies. The Yasuki themselves have remained neutral in the Crab civil war.

If at least some of the PCs are willing to help, Hida Tobashi is deeply grateful, and declares he will send the two Hiruma, Hitaka and Hoshiro, back with the PCs as assistants. He and Daidoji Takazara will continue to seek other allies. If any of the PCs are ronin, Takazara will quietly offer each of them 4 koku to take part in the mission.

If the PCs express the intent of traveling overland, Tobashi will look fretful. “I do not know if you can arrive in time... it took us twelve days to make it here.” If the PCs ask about travel by ship, Daidoji Takazara will briefly enter the conversation. “The Mantis control sea access to Earthquake Fish Bay. I would suggest you speak with their local representatives.”

Hida Tobashi will repeatedly emphasize to the PCs that they must hurry, there is little time to spare, and lady O-Ushi may already be in grave danger. As soon as his meal is finished, he will set out on the road again, accompanied by Daidoji Takazara. He pauses only to offer a brief goodbye to the two young Hiruma, wishing them luck.

The State of the War

If any of the PCs (and especially any “rebel” Crabs) ask about the recent fighting, the nature of Kisada’s armies, or any related question, the three Crabs all turn grim. Tobashi, who fought in the battle which broke Sukune’s army, speaks in a low, harsh voice. “Legions of undead now serve alongside the soldiers of Kisada. Our armies were overrun, and our dead swell the enemy ranks. I escaped only by abject flight, a few handfuls of us making it out to Face of the East and other minor strongholds. Lord Sukune-sama and most of his surviving troops fled back to Razor of the Dawn Castle.”

Daidoji Takazara and the Hiruma cannot confirm this part of the story (they were already in Face of the East Castle when the battle was fought), but they all confirm that oni and other Shadowlands creatures have been roaming freely through Crab lands since spring.

If the PCs ask specifically about Hida Kisada, Kuni Yori, or other leadership figures, Tobashi will relate the following: “I cannot speak to anything I saw myself... but I heard from others at the battle that they saw Hida Yakamo in the forefront. They said he fought completely without mercy, and his blows rent armor like origami.”

Special Case: Crab Loyalists

If any of the PCs are Crab “loyalists” (followers of Hida Kisada), this situation will present them with some difficult choices. Do they abandon O-Ushi and her infant son, potentially the only heir to the Hida family? Do they remain loyal to Hida Kisada in the face of testimony that Shadowlands forces now fight openly on his side?

If a “loyalist” PC openly expresses his/her position, the three Crabs will make one attempt to convince them of their error, citing their knowledge of Kisada’s alliance with the Shadowlands. If the PC does not change position, the Crab will refuse to speak further, demanding that the PC leave. If any PC becomes insulted enough to issue a challenge, the Crab will refuse to accept it – their duty to their lord comes first – but Hida Tobashi will promise to meet such PCs someday, when the war is over, for a settling of accounts.

Part One: Getting There

The rest of this adventure assume that the PCs have accepted Hida Tobashi’s request and are going to Sunda Mizu Mura to try to help retrieve Hida O-Ushi from the Crab lands. If the PCs are to have any hope of arriving in time, they will need to go by sea – travel by land will take seven days just to reach the Crane-Crab border, and four more to reach Sunda Mizu Mura.

The two young Hiruma will not be able to offer the PCs any help in this matter – they have never traveled outside Crab lands before, and relied on the Daidoji to get here. They will accompany the PCs wherever they go, and show impatience if things drag on for more than a half-day, but otherwise make no contribution to this phase of the adventure.

Getting Passage

In order to go to Sunda Mizu Mura by sea, the PCs will need to get passage on a Mantis ship, since the Mantis are currently restricting access to Earthquake Fish Bay (which is the only sea route to the city). If they did not learn this from Daidoji Takazara, they can find out by rolling **Commerce/Intelligence** at TN 15 or simply speaking with the local merchants and ship captains.

If the PCs speak with any of the local Mantis ship captains (there are several Mantis vessels in port), they will find it a fruitless experience. Most of the ships are due to sail to other destinations (the Mantis Isles, various other coastal ports, the Imperial Capital) and will not change course without permission from a higher authority within the Mantis Clan. Only one ship, the *Victory* (captained by Yoritomo Shuzomura), is planning to sail to Sunda Mizu Mura, and he will not take passengers without the authority of the local Mantis ambassador, Yoritomo Nagumo. (Shuzomura will be polite but unyielding, directing aggressive PCs to speak with Nagumo. “I am under orders from Lord Yoritomo-sama himself to act only on Nagumo-san’s orders.”)

The PCs can also learn about Yoritomo Nagumo by asking around and rolling **Courtier/Awareness** or **Commerce/Awareness** at TN 15. (PCs with mercantile backgrounds, such as Yasuki, do not need to ask others in order to make the skill roll.) Success informs the PCs that Nagumo is a senior member of the Storm Legion and a distant relative to the Clan champion, Yoritomo. He is known to have ambitions to tighten relations with the Yasuki family and absorb them into the Mantis Clan.

- Mantis PCs, or PCs who make a Raise on their initial roll, also know that he has a daughter of marriageable age.
- PCs who seek additional information/leverage on Nagumo will have to spend several hours speaking with the local merchant community, and either roll **Investigation/Awareness** at TN 20 or spend at least 2 koku in bribes. (A cert that awards “useful information” could also be employed here.) Success lets the PCs learn that Nagumo is planning to send his wife and daughter to Yasuki Yashiki for “diplomatic consultations” – probably an attempt at a marriage alliance.

Negotiating with Yoritomo Nagumo

Nagumo will meet with the PCs in his residence, a fine-quality private house located on a hilltop above the town, well away from the stink and crowding of the docks. Attentive servants offer the PCs tea and snacks while they wait for him to see them.

The Mantis ambassador is a balding man in middle age, dressed in a fine kimono, and wearing several golden rings which gleam even in the pallid light afforded by this miserable weather. "Please, be welcome in my house, samurai," he says effusively, and clasps his hands together earnestly. "How can the Mantis Clan assist you?"

It is up to the PCs how much to tell Nagumo about their intentions – at a minimum, obviously, they need to get passage to Sunda Mizu Mura. He will listen politely but initially expresses reluctance to aid the journey. His exact choice of words will vary, depending on how the PCs approach him, but he will always speak smoothly and diplomatically. For example, if the PCs cite their desire to help rescue Hida O-Ushi, Nagumo might reply as follows:

"Honored guests, I must consider your request most carefully. On the one hand, it is most noble to lend aid to a fellow Samurai in time of need. On the other, my assistance could be seen as interference in what is clearly an internecine dispute among our Crab cousins. We are constantly involved in the most delicate of negotiations to establish equitable trading partnerships in Sunda Mizu Mura, and provoking the Crab authorities could be most unwise."

Nagumo's only genuine interest is to promote the Mantis Clan's commercial and dynastic ambitions in Yasuki territory, and he does not have any interest in the Crab conflict except insofar as it may help or hinder those goals. Since he suspects the "loyalists" will win the civil war, he does not want to lose face with them by openly supporting the rebels. However, he is also skilled at playing both sides of the fence.

If the PCs simply want to talk Nagumo into helping them, they will have to do two things:

- 1) Pledge to downplay his assistance. Nagumo does not want it widely known that he may have helped the Crab rebels, even indirectly.
- 2) Show him some way in which he benefits from helping them. This does not have to be an immediate financial gain – it could be

something subtle, such as pointing out that saving the only known heir to the Hida family could have great value in future. The GM should reward any reasonably creative and well-presented argument.

Alternative Approaches

Clever PCs who know about Nagumo's ambitions in Yasuki lands could offer to work on his behalf in return for his assistance. (This offer will be especially effective if any of the PCs are Crab, especially Yasuki.) If the PCs make a sincere and credible offer of this nature, Nagumo will be willing to send them... but he will also expect them to uphold their end of the bargain.

Exceptionally wealthy PCs could simply try to offer Nagumo enough money to allow them passage on the *Victory*. This will require a minimum offer of 30 koku to buy passage for the entire party. Nagumo will negotiate extensively, trying to bring up the total, but is willing to settle for 30 koku so long as the PCs pledge to be properly circumspect.

Finally, PCs who know about (or suspect) Nagumo's plans for his daughter could offer to assist with that matter, or to help escort her safely into Yasuki territory. (After all, a war zone is always dangerous.) This is potentially the best approach, since Nagumo has been considering hiring some ronin for the same task. If the PCs make this offer, Nagumo smiles delightedly.

"Ah, my friends, I believe that is indeed a boon which would be of great value to me." He gestures to a servant, and after a moment a door slides open, admitting a well-kept middle-aged woman in a beautiful kimono. Walking behind her is a moderately pretty young girl of perhaps thirteen years. They bow in unison and seat themselves behind him. "Allow me to present my wife, the lady Yoritomo Miyane, and our daughter Miyoko. I am pleased to say that Miyoko already has shown her family's head for business. It is my intention to send her to study with the Yasuki, to learn their arts. Her mother will accompany her, of course, to ensure that propriety is observed. Since my own duties here preclude my making any sea voyage at the moment, an escort of honorable samurai to ensure their safety would be most appreciated."

Regardless of how the PCs manage to convince Nagumo, he will make sure to point out that he cannot assure their return. *"Regrettably, the Victory will have to leave for other tasks immediately after this trip, and I cannot tell you exactly when another of my ships*

will be able to visit Sunda Mizu Mura. You may be obliged to remain in the area for some time, or find your own way home. I trust this will not be overly burdensome.”

Option: Smuggling

Some PCs may suspect that other Clans still have a way of getting in to Sunda Mizu Mura. This is correct. PCs who have contacts (Allies or Favors) within the Yasuki or Daidoji families, or who are members of those families themselves, may roll **Courtier/Awareness** or **Commerce/Intelligence** at TN 20 to learn that these families are both running smuggling routes through the city.

PCs who decide to take advantage of these smuggling routes to reach Yasuki lands will need to convince the appropriate family to undertake such a risk. There are three ways to do this:

- 1) “Cash in” (erase) at least two Favors or Major Allies (or four Minor Allies) with the appropriate Clan.
- 2) Give a credible reason why smuggling them in would benefit the Clan/family in question, and pay 10 koku to cover expenses.
- 3) Pay a minimum of 40 koku to be smuggled in “no questions asked.”

See “Appendix #5: Fate of Smugglers” for details of what the PCs will have to go through in order to survive their smuggling trip.

Part Two: Journey to Sunda Mizu Mura

The trip from Otosan Uchi to Earthquake Fish Bay will take two days, with the ship dropping anchor in a section of sheltered shoreline for the night. The *Victory* is a top-quality Mantis kobune, and easily handles the rain and tossing waves. By the second day, the ship has sailed out of the bad weather, and bright sunshine accompanies it into the great Bay (see “Earthquake Fish Bay” below).

The captain of the *Victory*, Yoritomo Shuzomura, is a bold and outspoken man who spends much of his time working alongside the crew, helping to keep the ship running smoothly. Some of the PCs may know him – he is a former player character – but since he is pledged to obey Yoritomo Nagumo, he will not refuse passage

even to PCs he considers enemies (although he will exploit his position as ship’s captain to deliver slights and insults).

Yoritomo Miyane and her daughter will also be on the voyage. If the PCs did not enlist themselves as escorts, the two Mantis women will for the most part hold themselves aloof, speaking briefly and politely. If the PCs are serving as their escorts, they will be friendlier, and engage in polite chat and discussion during the journey. If the PCs missed any of the “current gossip” from the beginning of the adventure, this would be a suitable time to introduce it. However, neither mother nor daughter will spill any information on the Mantis Clan’s status or intentions.

- If any of the PCs are female bushi, the daughter Miyoko will show an interest in them. She feels somewhat constrained by her family’s mercantile ways, despite her talent for them, and is envious of the more active and glorious life which she imputes to these PCs. Given the chance, she will try to befriend them, encouraging them to tell stories of their glorious deeds.

The two young Hiruma will become more enthusiastic as the voyage approaches the Crab lands, and begin to express guarded optimism on the prospects for their mission. Both of them will try to befriend the PCs, especially Crab PCs, although the motives of “Hitaka” are sinister – he will try to learn as much as he can about the PCs so he can turn on them later.

- “Hiruma Hitaka” will make a point of actively flirting with any female PC who shows the slightest romantic or lecherous interest in him. He will play the role of an innocent but enthusiastic young romantic.
- Hiruma Hoshiro, on the other hand, is shy and uncertain around women, despite being two years older than “Hitaka.” If anyone draws attention to the contrast between his behavior and that of his “brother,” he will smile in embarrassment. “Oni-chan’s always been the luckier of us,” he says, showing no signs of rancor or jealousy.

A Sinister Seduction

If any female PC seems interested in (or vulnerable to) Hitaka’s advances, he will make a Seduction attempt – a **Contested roll** of his **Seduction/Awareness** against the PC’s **Willpower**, with “Hitaka” gaining 3 extra unkept dice from being Dangerously Beautiful. (If the attempt succeeds, the PC can still try to resist by rolling

an **Honor Test** at TN 20.) While visiting his attentions on a seduced PC, “Hitaka” will make a tiny cut in his gum, so that any kiss will transfer a small amount of his blood to the target, potentially setting up his Blood Domination power for later in the adventure. (This will also force the PC to roll **Simple Earth** at TN 10 to avoid gaining a point of Taint, although the GM should keep this secret until the end of the adventure.) “Hitaka” will not attempt to use this advantage now, saving it for when it will have the most impact.

Special Note for Paranoid PCs: Some PCs who have dealt in the past with Oni no Pekkile may be suspicious of the two young and handsome Hiruma brothers. However, it will be difficult to try to prove anything without being insulting (although not as much here, dealing with Crabs, as it might be under other circumstances).

- Hiruma Hoshiro has a single point of Taint (the result of being Blood Dominated). This cannot be detected by anything except, possibly, a Kuni Witch-Hunter who manages to make TN 40 on a Taint detection roll.
- Anyone trying to detect Taint on “Hiruma Hitaka” is at a +15 TN penalty. Also, if he suspects that someone is trying to “catch” him, he will cast *Pekkile’s Visage* on himself and then stage a confrontation, openly challenging them to test him with jade.

Arrival at Earthquake Fish Bay

As the Victory passes over the sunken Tidal Land Bridge, the splendid expanse of Earthquake Fish Bay, the largest bay in the Empire, glistens before your eyes. On the far bank, barely visible from this distance, is Sunda Mizu Mura (Clear Water Village), the large town which is the heart of the Yasuki mercantile empire. Behind the town looms the low, ominous profile of the Wall Above the Ocean Mountains, which close off access to the northern Crab lands. Across the bay from the city, slightly closer to you, can be seen the frowning splendor of Yasuki Yashiki, the seat of the Yasuki family, a magnificent castle perched on the side of a low mountain.

It is mid-morning, and scores of fishing vessels dot the placid waters of the bay – though not so many as would have been seen before the civil war began. The light of Mother Sun turns their small square sails as white as the clouds which clutter the sky, following in the wake of the recent bad weather.

Three hours’ sailing take you across the bay to the docks of Sunda Mizu Mura, where several other Mantis ships are tied up. You can also see many ships bearing the Yasuki mon, although most of them are tied up quayside and clearly have not sailed in some time.

As you disembark the ship, the two Mantis ladies accompanying, a well-dressed young man in Crab colors scuttles down the dock toward you. “Welcome, welcome, honorable ladies of the Mantis,” he smiles. “I am Yasuki Riku, servant and assistant to Yasuki Yoshinori, acting daimyo of Yasuki Yashiki. My lord is pleased that your journey here was safe, and we are honored by the presence of such prominent ladies of the Mantis Clan.” If the PCs advance themselves as escorts to the Mantis ladies, he will raise an eyebrow. *“Your pardon, honored guests. We had expected the ladies Yoritomo to be escorted by members of their own family.”* Otherwise, he simply ignores the PCs, focusing all his attention on the Mantis.

This fellow, Yasuki Riku, is a flunky and assistant to Yasuki Yoshinori, the local daimyo. He will play the simpering courtier will trying to worm as much information as possible out of everyone.

Part Three: Hospitality in Yasuki Lands

The situation in Yasuki lands is tense. The Mantis are militarily dominant, but only until one of the two Crab factions wins the civil war – which is looking increasingly likely to be the loyalists. Meanwhile, the Yasuki and the Mantis are engaged in a covert commercial war for control of Sunda Mizu Mura. The Daidoji Trading Council is also meddling in the area, hoping to take advantage of the distraction of its rivals.

If the PCs are here as escorts to the Mantis ladies, or to work on behalf of Yoritomo Nagumo, they will be immediately led to Yasuki Yashiki, and young Yasuki Riku will make a point of probing them for information. (Immediately revealing the true reason for their visit here is not wise, since it will reduce their apparent value to the Yasuki.)

If the PCs managed to get here without committing to help the Mantis, they will be free to go where they wish. However, trying to work around the travel restrictions in the area will probably force them to eventually visit Yasuki Yashiki regardless.

The Military Situation

Currently, the Yasuki lands are under occupation by the forces of the Mantis-led Yoritomo Alliance. These comprise roughly 1,000 Mantis bushi, divided into four different large units (each commanded by its own *taisa*, or captain), and about 110 Sparrow bushi with their own commander, Suzume Oaku. There are also a handful of Centipede shugenja and Wasp bushi who report directly to the overall commander, Yoritomo Nokote. The Mantis fleet shuttles in and out of the Bay constantly, bringing supplies.

The Yasuki have a very small military force in the area – no more than 200 bushi – but have been very careful not to offer direct resistance to the superior Mantis troops.

The Players

There are three main NPCs in the area which the PCs can potentially deal with:

Yoritomo Nokote: The commander of the Mantis occupation force. Nokote is an intelligent, capable man in his mid-thirties, and like Nagumo is a member of the Storm Legion. His current objectives are to hold the area (an increasingly difficult task, as it appears the Kisada “loyalists” will soon win the Crab civil war), to subvert the power and influence of the Yasuki family, and to block any maneuvers by the Daidoji.

Yasuki Yoshinori: The daimyo of Yasuki Yashiki, and the second-highest ranking Yasuki overall (after Yasuki Taka, who is elsewhere in the Empire). Yoshinori is a skinny middle-aged man with a balding head, receding chin and long, thin fingers. He is a charming conversationalist, albeit in a rather oily, mercantile fashion which may inadvertently offend more traditionalist PCs. Yoshinori’s main objective is to block the Mantis Clan’s attempts to absorb and control the Yasuki lands. He considers all other matters in light of that overriding goal.

Daidoji Munetsu: A friendly, handsome man in his early forties, with a well-trimmed beard and piercing eyes. Munetsu is a senior member of the Daidoji Trading Council, and is here mainly to run the Crane Clan’s smuggling operations. He is also attempting to subvert both the Mantis and the Yasuki, hoping to lay the groundwork for an eventual recovery of these lands by the Crane Clan (the Crane controlled these territories centuries ago, before the Yasuki family switched Clans).

News From O-Ushi?

The PCs’ primary goal, of course, is to find out about Hida O-Ushi’s status and, if possible, assist her flight to the coast. O-Ushi sent a message to the city (via a Hiruma scout) five days ago. All three of the major authorities in the city (Nokote, Yoshinori, and Munetsu) are aware of this, and can inform the PCs if asked. The PCs can also learn about this by asking around among the local Crab troops (and rolling **Investigation/Awareness** at TN 15) or the local commoners (and rolling **Kuenai/Awareness** at TN 15 or **Investigation/Awareness** at TN 20).

- Five days ago, a samurai-ko named Hiruma Imai came into the city. She reported that O-Ushi was at the village of Yasuki Hanko, on the far side of the Wall Above the Ocean Mountains. O-Ushi was planning to fight her way through Roka Seidai (Prosperous Pass), one of the minor passes through the mountains.
- Hiruma Imai left the next day to scout the pass. Neither she nor O-Ushi has been heard from since.

Once the PCs learn about this, their goal should be obvious: take the Prosperous Pass and try to locate O-Ushi. (If some of the PCs have Hiruma Imai as a True Friend, this should give them all the more motivation to undertake the task.)

Prosperous Pass (Roka Seidai)

Any PC who rolls **Lore: Crab/Intelligence** at TN 10 or **History/Intelligence** at TN 15 (or who asks the local Crabs, or who has Way of the Land for Crab lands) will know that Prosperous Pass is one of three minor passes through the Wall Above the Ocean mountains, connecting the Yasuki territories with the eastern Hida lands. If the PC makes a Raise on the roll (or asks about military capabilities), they will also know that centuries ago, when the Yasuki were part of the Crane Clan, the passes were fortified with castles. In the seven hundred years since then, the castles have been largely abandoned.

Unfortunately, access to Prosperous Pass (and to the other two passes in the Wall Above the Ocean Mountains) is controlled by the Mantis occupation troops. They will not allow the PCs through without authorization from a higher authority. Even if the PCs are Emerald Magistrates, members of the Imperial families, or other figures of rank, the Mantis will refuse passage (albeit politely): “We apologize, samurai-sama,

but we must obey our superiors, just as you must. Duty is duty. We regret any insult.”

If the PCs ask where they can find the Mantis commander, Yoritomo Nokote, they can learn that he is staying in Yasuki Yashiki, where he is officially a “guest” of the Yasuki family.

Alternative Approaches?

Some PCs may be unwilling to seek the assistance of the Mantis commander, or his rivals. PCs who take this attitude will be encouraged by “Hiruma Hitaka,” who will see this as a good way to steer the PCs into unproductive actions. His “brother” Hiruma Hoshiro will take a more cautious approach.

If the PCs wish to get into Prosperous Pass without permission, they will basically have two choices: stealth and force.

PCs who take a **stealth** approach can try to slip past the Mantis patrols and enter the pass. This can only have a chance of success at night, or if the PCs have magic to make themselves invisible. Each PC will have to defeat the Mantis patrol leader with a **Contested roll of Stealth/Agility** against the Mantis’ **Hunting/Perception**. If the roll fails, the Mantis will notice the PCs and move to intercept them. PCs who flee immediately can probably make it back into the city safely – otherwise they will have to fight or submit to arrest.

PCs who use **brute force** will have to find a way to defeat (or get past) a Mantis patrol. These patrols consist of one Mantis officer and eight normal Mantis bushi. If any fight lasts more than two rounds, the next patrol will notice, and arrives in ten minutes. In the event of a major battle, additional reinforcements (including Centipede shugenja) will arrive quickly.

If the PCs are generally seen and identified as having attacked Mantis troops, they will be branded as criminals, and will be attacked on sight by all Mantis forces in the region. This will, among other things, make it impossible for them to return safely with O-Ushi.

Option: Suzume Oaku

PCs who have played the adventure *Lies, Lies, Lies* may remember Suzume Oaku, whose failed wedding they attended in that adventure. Oaku subsequently married a Mantis bride, cementing his Clan’s admission to the Yoritomo Alliance.

It is possible that some PCs may have earned personal gratitude or recognition from Suzume Oaku’s family during that adventure. Such PCs might think of trying to exploit that connection now to get themselves admitted to Roka Seidai. The GM must adjudicate any such action carefully – Oaku will not be willing to openly defy the Mantis, but he is a decent man and will be reluctant to say no to those who have helped him in the past. If the PCs handle this option skillfully, it can succeed.

Part Four: Visiting Yasuki Yashiki

If the PCs arrive in Sunda Mizu Mura as escorts for Nagumo’s wife and daughter, the Yasuki representative (Yasuki Riku) will escort them directly to Yasuki Yashiki, where they will be welcomed as honored guests. If the PCs came without such an arrangement, they will have to approach the castle themselves and request an audience.

Either way, in order to reach the castle the PCs will have to cross a giant arched bridge which spans the River of Gold where it emerges from the Wall Above the Ocean Mountains and flows into Earthquake Fish Bay. The bridge itself is a wonder of Kaiu engineering, a massive span wide enough for twenty men to walk abreast. As they are crossing the bridge, they will meet Daidoji Munetsu:

A handsome older man with a well-trimmed beard is leaning on the railing of the bridge, looking out over the great Bay with a contemplative expression. His garments are in the colors of the Crane, although the tones are more muted than the usual bright shades. As you approach, he turns toward you and bows politely. “Greetings! What brings such diverse travelers across this bridge on such a splendid day?” He checks himself. “Ah, I am remiss. Permit me to introduce myself. Daidoji Munetsu, at your service.” He bows again, more deeply.

If the PCs are in the company of Yasuki Riku, an exchange of strained pleasantries and tight-lipped smiles will ensue, as Riku explains that “these samurai were kind enough to escort these honorable ladies of the Mantis,” and Munetsu explains that he is also on his way to Yasuki Yashiki and asks to accompany them. “Of course, of course,” Riku agrees through clenched teeth. No topic of significance will be raised for the remainder of the journey to Yasuki Yashiki, unless the PCs bring it up.

If the PCs come to Yasuki Yashiki on their own, they will still meet Munetsu on the bridge. He will politely offer to accompany them to the castle, and inquires casually about their purposes here, as well as about the general news of the Empire (“we are somewhat isolated here, you understand”). He will show sympathy for any troubles the PCs have been having with the local Mantis troops, and if the PCs seem significantly anti-Mantis in their attitudes, he asks if there is anything he can do to help. “I am but a humble diplomat, but I do have some minor influence here and there.”

The Castle of the Yasuki

The Yasuki palace is a splendid castle, eight stories high, fluttering with banners – you can see the colors of both the Crab and the Mantis on display. The castle’s interior is resplendent with decorations and artwork. Although not a match for the magnificence of the Crane castles, it is still quite impressive, especially compared with the cold, blunt practicality which characterizes other Crab castles.

If the PCs arrive with Yasuki Riku, they will be immediately shown to guest rooms and encouraged to bathe and rest themselves. The Yasuki will supply the PCs with clean clothing to wear during their visit.

If the PCs come on their own, most likely to request an audience with Yoritomo Nokote, they will be admitted after a half-hour wait. Again, they will be given a chance to bathe and change clothes, although this time they will not be offered guest rooms or clothing.

An Audience in the Yasuki Palace

Eventually, the PCs will be shown into a magnificent audience chamber on the castle’s third floor. Yasuki Yoshinori will be present along with his flunky Riku. Yoritomo Nokote will be seated next to Yoshinori, and an **Etiquette/Intelligence** roll at TN 10 perceives that the seating implies a rough equivalence of authority between the two.

- Daidoji Munetsu will be seated prominently among the courtiers in the audience room.
- If the PCs came in the company of the two Mantis women, Yoshinori will start things by offering lengthy and ostentatious welcomes to them. “We look forward to many pleasant and profitable evenings of discussion.” He smiles in an oily fashion, and the two women bow in acknowledgment.

- If the PCs came separately, the two Mantis ladies will be part of the court, and watch the proceedings attentively.

Eventually, the PCs will be presented, with Yasuki Riku making the introductions. Yoshinori addresses the PCs: “*Welcome to Yasuki Yashiki. It is indeed a rare privilege to have so many distinguished visitors at once.*”

- If the PCs came in the company of the Mantis ladies, Yoshinori will acknowledge this ostentatiously. “*Yoritomo Nagumo-san is quite fortunate to have friends such as you available to escort his daughter to us. We are grateful for your efforts, since any harm to her would be most unfortunate.*” He smiles simperingly at Yoritomo Nokote.
- If the PCs have already tried to enter Roka Seidai, or have discussed the reason for their visit with Yasuki Riku, Yoshinori will add the following: “*If there is any favor I can offer you, please, stay here for dinner. Afterward we can discuss such matters.*”

If the PCs speak openly in the court about their mission (to rescue Hida O-Ushi), or the need to enter the Prosperous Pass, Yoritomo Nokote will take control of the conversation, while Yoshinori falls silent with a pained expression on his face. “*As military commander of these lands, their security is my responsibility, a responsibility which I owe both to my Lord Yoritomo and to the honorable Yasuki who are under my protection.*” If the PCs have not already learned of the recent message which Hiruma Imai delivered from O-Ushi, he will speak of it. “*We have received a message from the Lady O-Ushi-san, via a Hiruma scout. If she still lives, she is somewhere on the far side of Roka Seidai. You understand, however, that I must be very cautious about allowing travel through the passes during these dangerous and uncertain times.*”

The PCs can try to convince Nokote now, although they are unlikely to be very successful. Smart PCs will ask for further discussion, or try to arrange a more private audience – Yasuki Yoshinori will use this as a cue to invite the PCs to attend dinner.

Dinner at Yasuki Yashiki

If the PCs attend dinner at the Yasuki palace, all of the major NPCs will be in attendance, including the Mantis ladies and Daidoji Munetsu. Everyone’s manners are

exquisitely polite, but the air is thick with underlying tension. The attitudes of the NPCs will vary depending on how the PCs have positioned themselves so far:

- If the PCs came here as escorts for the Mantis ladies, both the Yasuki and Daidoji Munetsu will tend to assume the PCs are in the Mantis “camp” until shown otherwise.
- If the PCs arrived at the castle in the company of Daidoji Munetsu, and include at least some Cranes in their ranks, both the Mantis and the Yasuki will regard them with suspicion.
- Crab, Crane, and Yoritomo Alliance PCs will be automatically assumed to be supportive of their own faction unless they show otherwise.

All of the NPCs will attempt to use the PCs to score conversational “points” against each other. In particular, if the PCs bring up the problem of Hida O-Ushi, this will lead to much conversational maneuver:

- The Mantis will speak of the Crab civil war and the question of whether the Hida can be trusted to continue the rule of the Crab Clan.
- Daidoji Munetsu will suggest that the Mantis would be glad for O-Ushi to die, since Yoritomo is rumored to have ambitions on the rule of the Crab Clan (Nokote denies this strongly).
- Yoshinori will wring his hands and point out that the Mantis, by sealing the borders against O-Ushi, are forcing the Yasuki into the appearance of taking sides in the Crab civil war. ***“We can hardly be expected to show gratitude for your protection, if that protection draws the wrath of the Great Bear down upon our heads.”*** The Mantis will counter that their intervention was at the encouragement of the Imperial House, and change the subject by mentioning rumors of Daidoji support for the Crab rebels (which Munetsu will calmly deny).

It is up to the PCs how they deal with this delicate diplomatic situation. Smart PCs will “play the angles” and avoid committing themselves too strongly to one faction.

After dinner, the Yasuki court will enjoy an evening in one of the castle’s rooftop gardens, with a fine view of Earthquake Fish Bay. There will be opportunity for the PCs to speak privately with each of the major NPCs. In order to get permission to cross the Prosperous Pass,

the PCs will need to convince one of the three (Yoshinori, Munetsu, or Nokote) to act on their behalf.

Negotiating with Yoritomo Nokote

In order to convince Nokote, the PCs will have to present a good reason for the Mantis to help O-Ushi. The most obvious is that O-Ushi’s son is currently the only heir to the Hida line, and rescuing and controlling that heir will put the Mantis in a very advantageous position. (Pointing out the danger of letting the boy fall into the hands of the Yasuki or Daidoji can also be helpful.) PCs who are aware of Yoritomo’s ambitions to take control of the Crab Clan can probably find ways to turn that to their advantage as well.

Appealing to Nokote’s honor, or to the battle against the Shadowlands, is unlikely to have much impact. He is a Mantis, and cares only about his own Clan and fulfilling Lord Yoritomo’s ambitions. However, as a Mantis, he is somewhat mercenary and subject to potential bribery. In particular, some PCs might be able to offer their assistance in Yoritomo Nagumo’s ambitions of marrying his daughter into the Yasuki in exchange for Nokote’s assistance on letting them through the pass.

Ultimately, if the PCs come up with a good reason for Yoritomo Nokote to help them, they will need to roll **Sincerity/Awareness** or **Manipulation/Awareness** at TN 20. If the PCs made a favorable impression of Yoritomo Miyoko or her mother, they will get a Free Raise on the roll. PCs who are members of the Yoritomo Alliance will also get a Free Raise. Yasuki and Daidoji PCs suffer a +5 TN penalty.

Negotiating with Yasuki Yoshinori

Convincing Yasuki Yoshinori to help the PCs will require that they find a way to tie rescuing O-Ushi into the Yasuki family’s struggle with the Mantis. Drawing attention to the value of controlling O-Ushi’s child (and keeping him out of the hands of the Mantis) is the most obvious way to do this. PCs with strong political connections (Ear of the Emperor, Imperial Spouse, Imperial Family with Glory 5.0 or better, or large numbers of potent Allies or Favors) can also offer to work on behalf of the Yasuki in the courts in exchange for Yoshinori’s assistance.

If the PCs come up with a good reason for Yasuki Yoshinori to help them, they will need to roll **Sincerity/Awareness** or **Manipulation/Awareness** at TN 20. If the PCs are Yasuki family, they get a Free Raise on the roll. PCs who are members of the

Yoritomo Alliance or the Daidoji family will suffer a +5 TN penalty.

Smart PCs remember that Yoshinori is a Yasuki and hence values money highly. For every 5 koku in bribes which the PCs offer, they get a Free Raise on the roll to convince him to help.

Negotiating with Daidoji Munetsu

Munetsu is simultaneously the easiest and the most difficult NPC to negotiate with. His Clan's goal here is to disrupt both the Mantis and the Yasuki, and if he thinks helping the PCs will accomplish that, he will do it readily. On the other hand, he has no direct military strength of his own here, his political position is far weaker than the other two factions, and he cannot afford to compromise himself openly. Therefore, under no circumstances will he help a party that contains even a single member of the Yoritomo Alliance, the Yasuki family, or a member of the "loyalist" faction of the Crab civil war.

Barring those restrictions, Munetsu will help if the PCs either (a) point out ways that doing so will hurt the other two factions, or (b) cite the Daidoji family's secret support for the Crab rebels. (Despite his mercantile ways, Munetsu is in some ways the most honorable person among the three "players" in Yasuki lands.)

If the PCs meet the right conditions for Munetsu to support them, no social skill roll is needed – he offers his assistance. He can also tell the PCs about the message from Hiruma Imai if they do not already know about it.

A Traitor in the Ranks

If (as is likely) the PCs have not yet detected the true nature of "Hiruma Hitaka," he will take action to warn the enemy of the PCs' plans. Once it appears that the PCs are going to get permission to enter the Prosperous Pass, Hitaka will use his Blood Domination power to force Hiruma Hoshiro into leaving the party and crossing the border to report their intentions to the enemy.

Hoshiro will try to leave the night before the PCs are due to leave for Roka Seidai, sneaking out of wherever they are staying (most likely either Yasuki Yashiki, or an Inn in Sunda Mizu Mura). PCs who are being paranoid and keeping watch on their companions can notice Hoshiro's departure with a **Hunting/Perception** or **Investigation/Perception** roll at TN 15. If the PCs are not setting watches, waiting for possible betrayals,

etc., they will need to roll **Simple Perception** at TN 25 to be awakened by Hoshiro's departure.

Hoshiro will head through the city to the Prosperous Pass, where he will stealthily slip past the Mantis patrols (traveling alone, his skills as a scout will make this relatively easy).

If the PCs stop him at any point, Hoshiro will be startled and confused. He will not be able to tell the PCs what he is doing, or why – the commands of "Hitaka" have clouded his mind. He will try to act innocent and then attempt another escape later, continuing to behave in this way until restrained or killed. He will not actually fight the PCs unless they attack him first, and will seem angry and betrayed if they do so.

"Hiruma Hitaka" himself will act the aggrieved brother, expressing shock and horror that his "onisan" would betray them, and speaking in dire tones about the corruption of Fu Leng. If there are no shugenja among the PCs, "Hitaka" will pretend to use his magic to detect magical influences on Hoshiro's mind. In order to see through these acts, the PCs will have to beat "Hitaka" on a **Contested roll** of their **Investigation/Perception** against his **Sincerity/Awareness**.

Regardless of whether or not the PCs prevent Hoshiro's treachery, "Hitaka" will attempt to remain with them, plotting to betray them a critical moment. If they do see through his act, he will still try to stonewall as much as possible, hoping to avoid combat or exposure of his true identity. If the PCs no longer trust him and refuse to let him travel with them, he will try to slip away and cross the Prosperous Pass to alert the villains.

If the PCs attack "Hitaka," or try to restrain/arrest him, he will fight, but will do his best to escape and give warning to the enemy.

Part Five: Into the Prosperous Pass

In order to enter Roka Seidai openly, the PCs will need to have gained the support of either Yasuki Yoshinori, Yoritomo Nokote, or Daidoji Munetsu. Regardless of which of the three agrees to help the PCs, the result will be the same: the next morning, the PCs find themselves in possession of a pass, signed by one of the four Mantis *taisa* (captains), authorizing them to enter the Prosperous Pass. The troops controlling the pass will

shrug and allow the PCs to go, perhaps with some dire observations on their chances of returning alive.

The first day's journey will be uneventful. The pass is fairly wide at this point, and climbs on a modest grade, gradually narrowing and getting steeper as the PCs ascend into the mountains. The weather is hot and cloudy, the air feeling heavy and oppressive, and PCs in armor find themselves sweating profusely.

If Hiruma Hoshiro or "Hiruma Hitaka" managed to slip away and enter the pass, the PCs can try to look for them. On the first day (before the rain, see "The Weather" below), a roll of **Hunting/Perception** at TN 15 or **Investigation/Perception** at TN 25 will confirm that someone has gone up the pass within the last couple of days. Shugenja PCs can also find a few Earth and Air spirits in the pass who remember seeing a young man pass by. (With two Raises, the spirits also remember Hiuma Imai passing through a few days earlier.)

By the end of the day, you have climbed to the top of the pass, passing through a narrow saddle between two jagged mountain peaks. Tucked into a small patch of flat ground is a battered roadhouse which looks like it has not been used in years. Looking back, you can see the great expanse of Earthquake Fish Bay and, on the horizon, the white line of the tidal land bridge, exposed by the evening tide.

The Band of Fallen Stars

The roadhouse is currently occupied by a small group of ronin, deserters, and sometime bandits who refer to themselves as the Band of Fallen Stars. There are a total of six normal bandits. They are led by Choto, a grizzled, one-eyed old villain with graying hair and a skin-full of scars.

PCs who are scouting the area for trouble can roll **Hunting/Perception** at TN 15 to notice an odor of woodsmoke in the air, and some signs of recent foot traffic around the roadhouse. PCs who are cautious/paranoid enough to listen at the door can roll **Simple Perception** at TN 20 to hear a few whispers and scuffling feet. Regardless, if the PCs enter the roadhouse, they will discover that it is currently occupied.

- If the PCs come in unsuspecting, the bandits will try to grab the first PC (two bandits will combine on a **Wrestling/Agility** attack, and a surprised PC will be TN 5 to Hit). They will attempt to hold their captive hostage as a negotiating tool.

- If the PCs enter on alert (either storming in or entering cautiously), the bandits will stay back, hold on the defensive, and try to negotiate.

Choto will speak on behalf of the bandits, and offers an ironic grin as he welcomes the PCs to the "Inn of Fallen Stars." *"We're a new and humble establishment, so we're very glad you've chosen to take a rest with us,"* he smirks. *"We'll have sake and plum wine soon, we hope. But first we need to talk about payment. I think you'll find our prices quite fair."* He looks meaningfully at the PCs' strings of money and rubs his fingertips together.

How aggressively Choto negotiates will depend on the situation. If he has a hostage, or the PCs come across as weak, cautious, or timid, he will push them as hard as he can, trying to extract a ransom of 5 to 10 koku in exchange for releasing his prisoner and leaving the area. If the PCs seem powerful, especially if they have avoided giving up a hostage, Choto will be much more cautious, and tries to bluff the PCs by claiming he has more men waiting in the rocks nearby. Besides trying to extract koku for a hostage (or not to attack), he will also try to negotiate money in return for leaving the area (so the PCs can sleep in the roadhouse) or for information.

Besides Choto, there are a total of nine other Fallen Stars. Many of these bandits are former Crab, fallen low and gone to seed – they have had enough of the civil war and just want to get out of the region. Toward Crab PCs they will show anxiety and hostility, although Choto himself is above such things. He has the following information to bargain with:

- The Fallen Stars have been in the pass for about a week, waiting for a chance to slip past the Mantis and get into Sunda Mizu Mura.
- Several days ago, they saw a single female Hiruma come up the pass. She was too quick for them to stop.
- If Hiruma Hoshiro slipped away from the PCs, they saw him as well. "Damned Hiruma running around like cockroaches!" Choto grumbles.
- If "Hiruma Hitaka" slipped away, the bandits did not see him (he used *Hands of Clay* to get through the pass unnoticed).
- The bandits have not been back down the far side of the pass since they got here. They will report

that Crab loyalist forces and Shadowlands monsters were overrunning all the territory on the far side of the mountains.

The Fallen Stars are, ultimately, a group dedicated to their own self-preservation. Their only real goal here is to get out alive, although if they can squeeze some koku out of the PCs, so much the better. If the PCs seem both powerful and aggressive, the bandits will ultimately withdraw rather than fight. If a combat does occur, they will retreat the moment the battle seems to be going against them.

Night in the Pass

Once the PCs have dealt with the problem of the Fallen Stars (and perhaps gained some useful information from them), they will be able to safely make camp for the evening.

If the PCs choose to camp in the roadhouse, they will find that it still has some stockpiled firewood and moth-eaten futons, but the bandits have stripped it of anything else useful. (If the PCs defeated the bandits in combat, they will be able to recover some bags of rice and other supplies.) The roof tiles are in severe disrepair.

Consequences of Treason

If Hiruma Hoshiro or “Hiruma Hitaka” managed to slip away to carry word to the villains, the PCs will be attacked during their night in the pass. This night-time ambush will comprise four Corrupted Crab bushi from Yakamo’s main force (see Appendix #2 for their stats). If Kuni Tsukute/“Hiruma Hitaka” alerted the enemy, he will accompany the Crab back to take part in the ambush. If Hoshiro delivered the message, he does not return – he has paid the price for his betrayal.

If the PCs are posting watches (they would be foolish not to, in hostile territory), those on watch can roll **Simple Perception** at TN 15 to detect the faint scuffling noises of the brutish, Tainted Crabs as they approach. For any PC who is sleeping, allow a **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 30 to hear something in time.

- If at least one PC detects the attack and sounds the alarm, they will have one action to snatch weapons, reach for scrolls, etc., before the combat begins.
- If the PCs do not detect the attack, or fail to alert their companions, those who are caught by surprise are attacked at TN 5 (+Armor, if any) on the first

round of combat, and cannot act until the second round.

The attackers (including Kuni Tsukute, if applicable) are demented fanatics, fight to the death, and employ the cruelest and most dishonorable tactics possible. Tsukute will use his maho spells to the best effect possible, and if he has managed to Blood Dominate a PC, he will now make the **Contested Willpower** roll to take control of that PC. (A controlled PC can resist with an **Honor Test** at TN 25.)

The Weather

A fierce rain squall moves through the pass in the early morning. If the PCs are in the roadhouse, the leaky roof fills the night with dripping noises. If they camped outdoors, their rest will be unpleasantly interrupted, and any campfires will be extinguished.

The rain will continue for an hour after dawn. Any tracks of travelers will be erased by the downpour.

Part Six: Meeting Hiruma Imai

Beyond the roadhouse, the pass descends the far side of the mountains, gradually winding its way down between jagged, heavily-forested slopes. The PCs catch occasional glimpses of the open farmland which lies beyond the mountains. The pass varies between twenty and forty feet wide.

After the morning rainstorm passes, the weather will still be dark and cloudy. The PCs notice that the clouds seem to be even darker farther to the north and west, toward the core of Hida lands. Heavy, damp wind blows through the mountains, and the PCs catch distant odors of smoke and dead flesh.

After two hours of travel (an hour after the rain stops), allow the PCs to make **Simple Perception** rolls at TN 15. With a success, they hear a noise ahead of them which sounds eerily like the howling of hunting dogs. It rises rapidly in volume as the PCs proceed down the pass.

You circle around a large stone butte and the pass turns into a road clinging to the outer edge of a sheer forested hillside. It proceeds in that fashion for about half a mile before plunging back in between two lower peaks. Ahead of you, halfway across the open section, a huge gnarled tree clings to the edge of the road, leaning out over the tree-covered drop. Two dog-like

beasts, their dirty fur sprouting sharp spines, circle around the base of the tree, snarling and baying up into the tangled branches.

The distance to the tree is about 200 yards. PCs who roll **Simple Perception** at TN 20 can make out the shape of someone hiding in the branches. If the PCs approach, or make any kind of ranged attack, the two Shadowlands dog-beasts will immediately break off and charge toward them, slaving and snarling. They are incredibly swift, faster than horses at a full gallop, and will be able to close the distance at the rate of 100 yards a round if they simply charge and don't fight. (They can move up to 50 yards and still attack that round.) Although fierce and deadly opponents, they are sensitive to jade, and will flee yelping if they take more than 15 points of damage from a single jade attack.

PCs who roll **Lore: Shadowlands/Intelligence** at TN 20 will realize they have never heard of these particular creatures before. During the combat, a **Simple Perception** roll at TN 10 will notice that the two beasts wear iron collars. If one or both creatures are killed, PCs examining their corpses (hopefully without touching them) can roll **Heraldry/Perception** at TN 10 to make out the mon of the Yasuki family inscribed on the collars. However, the mon has been changed, replacing the traditional Yasuki fish-image with one of a slaving dog-face.

If "Hiruma Hitaka" is still with the PCs, he will pretend to help them, faking a failed attempt to cast an Earth spell. If and when one of the beasts flees, he will successfully cast a spell in order to try to allay any PC suspicions.

Hiruma Imai, the Crab scout, is hiding in the tree. She has a savage bite in her left arm and is at the +10 Wound rank. She will climb down awkwardly once the dog-beasts are driven away.

An Unconventional Scout

Hiruma Imai is a quiet, brooding young samurai-ko, with rough-cropped short hair that is knotted into uncombed clumps. Her skin is weather-roughened, her limbs muscular, and her hands are calloused by the grip of weapons. She wears only the simple, travel-stained garments of a Hiruma scout. Despite her harsh appearance, she could be quite pretty if she bothered to wash up and comb her hair.

Imai is an extreme rarity among the Crab, a female scout. (The Hiruma usually keep their women safely at home to birth new generations.) Imai's brother

Gohaku, also a Hiruma scout, was slain in the Shadowlands many years ago, and she took up her oaths as a bushi in order to avenge him. Her parents have urged her several times to end her dangerous life, marry, and carry on the family line, but she has always refused. Her brother's unquiet spirit haunts her, and she will not leave her duties until he is placated. Any PC who can see ancestors or ghosts will notice the spirit which lurks around her.

PCs may have met Imai in the adventures *Duty at the Wall* and *Dark Eyes on the Wall*, and some PCs may have her as a True Friend. She is basically a lonely, bitter, and unhappy young woman, but hides her emotions beneath the mask of duty and grim determination. Any obvious attempt to seduce or romance her will fail utterly.

Imai can share the following information with the PCs:

- Hida O-Ushi and her companions have been trapped in the ruins of an old castle called Shiro Yasuki Yoroï. Imai saw the battle two days ago from farther up the pass.
- The attacking force was substantial, numbering over thirty, and appeared to be a mixture of Crab bushi and Shadowlands monsters. Imai saw dog-like beasts which were probably the same as what "treed" her – they were held on chains by a large Crab who wore no armor.
- If the PCs ask who was with O-Ushi, Imai looks grim. "There were ten of us originally, including the old man with the Jade Hand – Lord Hida Sukune-sama insisted he come, to get the Hand out before it was too late." They lost two bushi in a skirmish fifteen days ago. She does not know how many more may have fallen since then.
- Imai is sure O-ushi was still alive – she watched an attack on the castle, and saw the woman crush someone's head with her signature Dai Tsuchi. She also saw the light of the Jade Hand.
- After she saw the siege, Imai began searching the mountains for an alternative route into the castle ruin – she knows that most castles have escape tunnels and other such options. Yesterday evening she found something promising, but before she could explore it, she was attacked by the Shadowlands dog-beasts. "They must have set them loose to search the hills for any escapees."

Imai is willing to either guide the PCs to the castle, or show them the potential secret entrance. Obviously, she will be much more effective if the PCs heal her wounds.

If “Hiruma Hitaka” is still with the party and still undiscovered at this point, he will urge them to make a direct attack and relieve Hida O-Ushi. “We cannot wait and waste time searching for some tunnel that may or may not enter the castle. If there was an escape route, would not O-Ushi-sama have found it already?”

It is up to the PCs what approach to take at this point. Imai will cooperate to the best of her ability, although she will not join a frontal assault on Shiro Yasuki Yoroi unless she has a True Friend in the party. “Hiruma Hitaka” will likewise ultimately cooperate with any decision, hoping to betray the PCs at a suitable moment.

Part Seven: The Siege of Shiro Yasuki Yoroi

Once the PCs locate Shiro Yasuki Yoroi, their objectives are simple: rescue O-Ushi, her son, and the Jade Hand.

Approaching from Outside

Hiruma Imai leads you to the peak of a jagged, tree-covered slope. Looking down through the branches, you can see the square outline of a ruined castle, its upper floors long since gone, leaving only the crumbling stone of the bottom two levels. The ruin sits on a small plateau about four hundred yards below you. You can see several tents set up across from the castle, and at least fifteen armed men in heavy armor are visible moving around. Banners in the dark red of the Crab flutter above the tents. Two large dog-like creatures are visible, straining at chains that are tied to a tree-stump.

- If any of the dog-beasts fled from the earlier encounter with the PCs, they will be chained up here as well.

If the PCs observe the scene for a few minutes, they can make out additional details:

- A caretaker for the dog-beasts will be visible after a short time: a muscular, bare-chested man, dressed only in a pair of dark hakama pants. The beasts greet him with leaping, snarling excitement, although it is difficult to tell whether they are being

affectionate or trying to attack him. He cracks a long whip to calm them down.

- If the PCs watch for a while, a very large bushi in elaborate armor will come out of one of the tents. This is Hida Yakamo, but he cannot be identified from this distance unless the PCs have a gaijin spyglass, spells that let them see better from a distance, etc. (Under such circumstances, they can roll **Lore: Crab/Intelligence** at TN 10, or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 15 if they are Crab, to identify him.)
- If the PCs watch Yakamo for any length of time, they can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 25. With a success, they perceive that something is moving near him, stirring the grass and oddly distorting the light, although whatever it is cannot be seen. (This is the Yakamo no Kamioni, see “Yakamo’s Powers” in Part Eight for details.) They will also see that he is sometimes accompanied and advised by a stoop-shouldered Kuni shugenja in dark robes – they may suspect this is Kuni Yori, but it is actually one of his apprentices, Kuni Satsujin, serving as Yakamo’s flunky and watcher.
- If Hiruma Hoshiro betrayed the PCs, he will be staked out on the ground, serving as a screaming, helpless meal for the dog-beasts.

If the PCs spend too long observing the scene, the dog-beasts will scent them and begin to bay with excitement. Their caretaker, Yasuki Nokatsu, will consult with Yakamo for a moment and then releases all the beasts, following them personally to make sure they find their prey. The PCs will have to lure the animals and their master out of sight and then kill them if they want to avoid an open battle with Yakamo’s entire force.

Infiltrating the Castle

During daylight, the PCs will find it very difficult to approach the castle without being spotted and attacked by Yakamo’s force. If they try to sneak down the forested slope and approach the back of the castle, they will each need to make a **Contested Roll of Stealth/Agility** against the **Hunting/Perception** of the Crab bushi and the **Simple Perception** of the dog-beasts. Failure means the PCs are noticed:

- If the villains beat the PCs by 5 or less, the PCs will have managed to get fairly close to the castle, and can race inside before the corrupt Crab can intercept them.

- If the villains beat the PCs by more than 5, the PCs will not be able to reach the castle before being intercepted by the corrupt Crab force.

If the PCs infiltrate at night, their chances are much better – they can substitute **Simple Agility** rolls for **Stealth/Agility** if they wish, and their opponents must beat them by more than 10 in order to intercept them before they reach the castle.

Shugenja PCs might be able to find ways to get the PCs inside undetected, such as concealing them with spells like *Mists of Illusion* or *Eyes Shall Not See*. This will still allow the dog-beasts a roll of **Simple Perception** at TN 20 to notice them, unless the PCs take steps to conceal their scent.

Alternatively, shugenja PCs could fly themselves, or others, into the castle with spells like *Call Upon the Wind* or *Wings of Fire*. However, if they do this during daylight, unless they also find a way to conceal themselves, they will be spotted and attacked (with archery and Kuni Satsujin's spells).

The Secret Tunnel

If the PCs follow Hiruma Imai, she will lead them to a rugged, forested slope above the pass. The castle cannot be seen from here. Imai points out the faint, almost invisible traces of a path which once wound between the boulders, noticeable more from the topography than from any surviving evidence. "The beasts attacked me before I could investigate further."

In order to locate the entrance to the old tunnel, the PCs will have to roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 15 or **Simple Perception** at TN 25. (Imai can roll as well, since she never had the chance to search here before.) With a success, the PCs discover a brush-shrouded hollow underneath a large boulder. Inside the hollow is a narrow tunnel, clearly man-made, snaking down into the mountain.

If the PCs follow the tunnel, they will either need light sources, or they will have to feel their way. The passage is very narrow, barely wide enough for one person, and the ceiling is low enough to force tall PCs to duck their heads. The floor alternates between sloping rock and carved steps.

The tunnel descends for several hundred feet and finally ends in a rockfall, a jumble of boulders and dirt which blocks the passage. PCs who roll **Simple Perception** at TN 15 will hear voices from somewhere

on the far side of the rockfall, and if their own lights are extinguished (or nonexistent) they will see a small amount of light filtering through cracks between the rocks. If the PCs shout or otherwise draw attention, the Crab on the far side of the rockfall will notice them.

There is a narrow channel through the rocks which some PCs might be able to navigate, with effort. A PC with the Small disadvantage, and not wearing Heavy Armor or a helmet, can get through by rolling **Simple Agility** at TN 15. A normal-sized PC with a Water ring of 3 or less can get through by stripping off all armor and rolling **Simple Agility** at TN 20. Other PCs will not be able to squeeze through at all.

The far side of the rockfall leads into the ruins of Shiro Yasuki Yoroi at the location marked on the map. From the inside, the fact that this rockfall conceals a tunnel can only be perceived with a roll of **Engineering/Perception** or **Siege/Perception** at TN 15, **Investigation/Perception** at TN 20, or **Simple Perception** at TN 25.

The PCs may want to clear out some of the rockfall and make the tunnel more accessible. From inside the tunnel, this will be physically impossible – the narrowness of the tunnel leaves no room to shift the boulders. From the castle side, it will require eight man-hours of labor to open the tunnel – only two PCs can work on the entrance at a time, but PCs with Strength of 5 or higher count double.

Shugenja PCs can greatly speed this process with spells such as *Know the Ground* or *Divide Into Ash*. As a rough guide to what a shugenja can accomplish, every two castings of *Know the Ground* (or every two Raises on a single casting) will be equivalent to one man-hour of labor clearing the tunnel. A single casting of *Divide Into Ash* will count as six man-hours of work.

The Layout of Shiro Yasuki Yoroi

The floor layout of the ruins of Shiro Yasuki Yoroi is shown on MAP #1. The floor of the ruins is a carpet of ancient, crushed stone and age-hardened wood – the compacted remains of the castle's collapsed upper floors. The ceiling of the castle is only half intact, and loose roof tiles occasionally slip and come down to smash on the ground.

The escape tunnel is buried beneath heaps of stone, and can only be perceived with a thorough search and a roll of **Engineering/Perception** or **Siege/Perception** at TN 15, **Investigation/Perception** at TN 20, or **Simple Perception** at TN 25.

The chamber marked “Shrine” contains ancient, worn-down statues to Bishamon, the Fortune of Battle, and Osano-Wo, the Fortune of Thunder. The statues are so worn with time that they are difficult to identify, but a roll of **Theology/Perception** at TN 10 will confirm who they represent. If any PC says a prayer here, the spirit of Osano-Wo might intercede (see “The Voice of Thunder” below).

The defenders have piled loose stone in front of two of the three entrances, to try to restrict enemy attacks. These heaps of rubble force any attacker to waste time and effort scrambling over them. Actually blocking the entrances, however, is not possible with the resources available – particularly since Kuni Satsujin can easily use his magic to eliminate any especially troublesome barrier.

The defenders of Shiro Yasuki Yoroï are all in the main central area, where they can watch the entrances. They comprise Hida O-Ushi (who is seriously wounded), her infant son, and three other Hida bushi. The bodies of two other Hida bushi lie dead on the floor. One of them is Hida Jikutsu – an aged, scarred warrior with only one hand, who has died within the last hour. Next to him, glowing softly, is the Jade Hand – it disconnected from his body after he died.

Meeting with Hida O-Ushi

However the PCs get into the castle – from outside or through the tunnel – they will have at least a short time to speak with Hida O-Ushi before her brother takes action (see “Yakamo’s Ultimatum” below).

Hida O-Ushi sits very still, cradling her infant son in her left arm. She is a compact, muscular young woman, with a face which might be pretty if it were not made harsh by a life of war. Blood-stained bandages circle her right leg, and her right arm hangs limp at her side. Her famed Dai Tsuchi sledgehammer lies on the ground next to her, the steel head smeared with blood and other matter.

O-Ushi is far more serious and grim than the cheerful and bawdy young woman PCs may have met in *Dark Eyes on the Wall*. She does not really expect to get out of here alive, and is concerned only with the possibility of saving her son. The arrival of the PCs will offer her some hope that this may be accomplished.

- If the PCs seem like a powerful fighting group, O-Ushi will urge them to take her son (and the Jade Hand) and fight their way out of the castle. She

hefts her war-hammer and promises to distract the enemy with an all-out attack, supported by her three remaining bushi.

- If the PCs seem stealthy or magically gifted, O-Ushi will again urge them to take her son and the Jade Hand, hoping they can slip out unobserved.
- If the PCs have located the tunnel, O-Ushi will recover a sense of hope, and urges the PCs and her bushi to clear the tunnel so that all can escape.
- If the PCs ask what has happened here so far, O-Ushi explains that only the power of the Jade Hand enabled them to hold out this long. Hida Jikutsu was fatally wounded during the last assault, at dawn, and spent the next few hours dying from a stomach wound. She expects the enemy to attack again soon.

O-Ushi is at the +15 Wound rank, and her right arm is broken. If the PCs have access to the spell *Regrow the Wound* or *Peace of the Kami*, they can heal her arm, restoring her to full fighting power. This will reinvigorate her spirits considerably, especially if the PCs appear to have decent combat capability, and she will switch tactics and call for them to hold out against her brother (who she calls only “the traitor”). However, if the PCs have located the tunnel, she will still try to ensure the survival and escape of her son and the Jade Hand, asking a quick or stealthy PC to get them safely away.

If the PCs do not have either of those spells, they can still reduce her Wound penalties with *Path to Inner Peace* or a **Medicine/Intelligence** roll (supported by a medical kit) at TN 25. Although her right arm remains useless, she will recover her spirits considerably as the pain of her injuries is eased.

If the PCs cannot heal O-Ushi’s injuries, they can still try to convince her to keep fighting. She is a Crab, and a well role-played invocation of courage and determination will be enough to make her recover her spirits and keep fighting.

Some PCs may want to ask O-Ushi and her companions about the latest news from the Crab “rebels.” She will share it willingly, although it is grim:

- Razor of the Dawn Castle was besieged, and was not expected to hold out for more than a couple of weeks.

- Her brother Hida Sukune was dying of consumption and fever when she left the castle – they had no shugenja who could treat the sickness.
- Shadowlands forces are now openly fighting alongside the armies of the Crab “loyalists,” many of whom are themselves Tainted – like those waiting outside the castle.

The Jade Hand

It is possible (unlikely, but possible) that one or more PCs on this adventure might be missing their right hand. Such a PC can attempt to claim the Jade Hand for their own by touching it to the stump (it must be a missing hand, not a missing arm – the Jade Hand will not lengthen itself to replace a lost arm). Provided the PC has an Honor Rank of at least 1.0, the Hand will fuse to their arm. The Jade Hand will never attach itself to a PC who deliberately cuts off his/her own hand.

There is only one Jade Hand, and consequently, only one PC in the campaign can claim it. If a situation arises in which a PC can claim the Jade Hand, the GM should contact the Campaign Administrator at <youta@rollanet.org> to determine whether or not the PC is actually eligible to have the Jade Hand cert.

Absent that, a PC will have to carry the Jade Hand. Award that PC the cert “Bearer of the Jade Hand.”

Yakamo’s Ultimatum

If the PCs do not make an immediate breakout attempt from the castle (e.g. they are trying to clear the tunnel or simply hoping to “hold out”), about an hour after they arrive, they will hear the booming voice of Hida Yakamo from outside. His words have a hollow, eerie quality, quite unlike a natural human voice. O-Ushi flinches and shuts her eyes, and her infant son begins to cry softly.

“Sister! Little Ushi-chan! My assistants tell me you have some new friends with you. More lives to be wasted in this futile battle. If you do not wish their blood on your hands, I will offer you a choice. Your life is forfeit, for daring to defy our father. But if you surrender, I swear to you that your son will be spared, to be raised as the Hida heir. And I will let all the others in Shiro Yasuki Yoroi depart these lands unharmed. If you choose to defy me, all those in the castle will pay the price in their life’s blood... and that blood will be on your soul. I give you one hour to decide.”

Although O-Ushi realizes that something terrible has happened to her once-beloved brother, this offer will still tempt her. The PCs should suffer a few nerve-wracking moments trying to convince O-Ushi to reject the offer. So long as they make a solid role-playing effort, O-Ushi will ultimately reject Yakamo’s proposal.

In the unlikely event that the PCs actually allow O-Ushi to agree with Yakamo’s offer, he seemingly keeps the bargain: the PCs and the three Crab bushi are allowed to leave Shiro Yasuki Yoroi safely, O-Ushi’s son is handed over to Kuni Satsujin for safe-keeping, and O-Ushi herself is left to face her fate. The PCs can take the Jade Hand with them so long as they keep it concealed. However, the bargain is actually a false one: once O-Ushi is dead, Yakamo will unleash the dog-beasts and his bushi to hunt down the PCs and recover the Hand.

The Voice of Thunder

Some of the PCs may wish to pay their respects in the shrine located within the ruined castle. If they do so, and a PC with Honor of at least 2.0 role-plays a sincere and courageous prayer to Osano-Wo or Bishamon (or both), the following scene occurs:

The silence of the ancient shrine is suddenly broken by a powerful voice. “HA! Have I ever seen such a pitiful band? The battle is not even joined and already you sit with heads hung as though defeated. Why should I offer my aid to such milk-sops?!” The ghostly form of a huge bare-chested warrior stands before you, clutching a tetsubo whose haft is circled by crackling bands of lightning.

This is Osano-Wo, the Fortune of Thunder, as any PC can tell by rolling **Theology/Intelligence** at TN 5. Osano-Wo is offended by the increasing corruption of the Crab Clan (which he once ruled, while still a mortal), and is interested in aiding the PCs, but only if he feels they are worthy of it. PCs must be bold, outspoken, aggressive, and contemptuous of death if they are to win Osano-Wo’s favor. Soft-spoken, eloquent, or cautious PCs will gain only his contempt. He will favor Crab and Mantis PCs over all others, of course, but any PC who displays the properly heroic and ferocious attitudes will earn his support.

PCs who convince Osano-Wo of their worthiness will gain his blessing: lightning plays around their bodies as they are infused with the power of Thunder. For the duration of the module, these PCs have one rank of

Strength of the Earth (an extra rank if they already possess the Advantage) and one extra Void point. They will also hear the roaring voice of Osano-Wo in their ears, urging them on each time they smite one of their Tainted foes.

The Traitor's Actions

It is possible that “Hiruma Hitaka” will still be with the PCs when they reach Shiro Yasuki Yoroi. He will wait for a critical moment to betray them, preferably while they are fighting desperately against Yakamo and his forces. If possible, he will try to snatch either the Jade Hand or O-Ushi's son and deliver his prize over to his true master. If he has managed to Blood Dominate a PC, he will now make the **Contested Willpower** roll to take control of that PC. (A controlled PC can resist with an **Honor Test** at TN 25.)

Part Eight: Battle with Hida Yakamo

Unless the PCs can manage to quickly spirit O-Ushi out through the tunnel underneath Shiro Yasuki Yoroi, the adventure will end with a final battle against Hida Yakamo and his forces. Depending on the PCs, this might be a defense of the castle (after Yakamo's ultimatum runs out) or a breakout attempt.

If the PCs simply attempt to **hold out** (either because they are hoping to clear the tunnel, or out of sheer courage), Yakamo will launch an attack after his one-hour ultimatum expires. The attack will be a powerful one, comprising Yakamo, his accompanying “familiar” (the Yakamo no Kamioni), twelve Corrupted Bushi, and the remaining dog-beasts (at least two, plus any survivors from the earlier encounter). They will storm through the castle's three entrances simultaneously (if the PCs have tried to block the entrances, Yori's apprentice Kuni Satsujin will use *Know the Ground* or *Divide Into Ash* to open them).

- Hida Yakamo will engage O-Ushi first, attacking until she is down/dead, then switching to the toughest-looking PC. His spiritual alter ego, the Yakamo no Kamioni, will prioritize its attacks against spellcasters.
- Hida O-Ushi will not be able to fight with her dai tsuchi hammer unless her broken arm is healed.
- Kuni Satsujin will hang back in a supporting roll, sheltering behind *Castle of Water* and using his

spells to disrupt the PCs. He is not above using *Jade Strike* against PCs he knows to be Tainted.

- Yasuki Nokatsu will stay behind the dog-beasts, urging them forward with cracks of his whip.

If the PCs make a **breakout** attempt, Hida O-Ushi and her three surviving bushi will charge directly at Hida Yakamo, attempting to tie him up while the PCs fight their way out. Hiruma Imai will accompany the PCs if one of them is a True Friend, otherwise she will stay to die at O-Ushi's side. The PCs will be engaged by four Corrupted Bushi and by Yasuki Nokatsu's dog-beasts. O-Ushi and her comrades will buy the PCs five rounds of time before falling, six rounds if O-Ushi's broken arm is healed. If the PCs can defeat their opponents within that time, they will be able to escape successfully. Otherwise, they will then have to face Yakamo (who will be down four Wound ranks, his Kamioni (unhurt), Kuni Satsujin (unhurt), Yasuki Nokatsu (unhurt), and four more Corrupted Bushi (two unhurt, two down three Wound ranks).

Managing the Combat

If the PCs are making a breakout attempt, the fate of the NPCs does not need to be “rolled out” – they perish heroically.

In a general fight, to avoid wasting time on too many rolls, only O-Ushi and Hiruma Imai should be rolled out like PCs. Treat the lesser Crab NPCs as follows: Each of O-Ushi's three bushi will tie up two Corrupted Bushi for three rounds of combat. At the end of those three rounds, the three bushi and three Corrupt Crab will be dead, and the other three Corrupt Crab will be down two Wound Ranks (to the +3 level).

Yasuki Nokatsu and His Dog-Beasts

Yasuki Nokatsu is a tall, muscular man who goes bare-chested, showing off his Taint-enhanced physique. He will try, as much as possible, to stay behind his dog-beasts, using cracks of his whip to drive them to attack, and to rally them if they retreat from the burning touch of jade. (This will take one round per beast.)

If the PCs disable or kill Nokatsu, any surviving dog-beasts will run wild, attacking anyone near them without discrimination. If all the dog-beasts are killed, Nokatsu will scream with fury, and attacks the PCs responsible, fighting to the death.

Hida Yakamo and the Kamioni

Hida Yakamo has undergone a ghastly maho ritual – his soul has been removed from his body and merged with the soul of an Oni. Yakamo’s intellect remains in his body, twisted and maddened by Taint, but his soul is gone, merged into the Oni’s soul to form a corrupt spiritual being, the Yakamo no Kamioni. Lines of spiritual force connect the two, much like the strings of a puppeteer, and the Kamioni cannot move more than twenty feet from Yakamo’s form.

Yakamo shows obvious signs of the dreadful ritual – his flesh is gray, his skin shrunken back against the thick muscles beneath, he does not sweat, and he breathes only when it is needed to speak. He feels no pain, and his body, being soulless, heals with unnatural speed and cannot die – if reduced to “Down,” it simply lies there while it repairs itself. Even if it is chopped to pieces, it will slowly put itself together again.

The Kamioni is all but invisible from a distance. Seen up close, it can dimly be made out as a translucent humanoid shape, although its vague outline makes it difficult to pin down its exact location. Magic which reveals hidden things (such as *By the Light of Lord Moon*) will reveal its location clearly. Those with the ability to detect Taint can locate it in that fashion as well, since it is suffused with the energy of Jigoku.

Due to the removal of his soul, Yakamo appears to spirits as a sort of “hole” in reality, and they are reluctant to go near him – his Magic Resistance represents this. A spell which targets him and fails due to this Magic Resistance will appear to “splash” away from him, the spirits dispersing in horror. The thin lines of spiritual energy which connect Yakamo to the Kamioni will be briefly visible in the light of the dispersing spirits.

If the Kamioni is destroyed, there will be a loud “snap” as the spiritual lines with Yakamo are severed. His physical body will immediately become vulnerable to death, perishing if reduced to the “Down” level. It will also run amok, attacking anyone nearby, as the intellect within finally loses all self-control.

Outcome of Battle

If the PCs manage to kill Yakamo and the Kamioni, and over half of his Corrupted Bushi, any surviving villains (Kuni Satsujin, etc) will flee the scene. The PCs, along with any surviving NPCs, will be free to return through the Prosperous Pass to Yasuki lands.

If the PCs make a successful breakout attempt (carrying O-Ushi’s son and/or the Jade Hand), they can flee back through the Pass successfully so long as they do not hesitate or turn back.

If O-Ushi and her comrades join the PCs in fleeing through the escape tunnel, they will have to head up the Pass immediately if they are to avoid Yakamo’s main force. In order to outdistance Yakamo’s troops, they must force-march up the Pass, rolling **Athletics/Stamina** at TN 15. (It can be assumed that all the Crab NPCs will make their rolls, but the PCs must all roll individually.) Shugenja PCs may be able to make this easier with creative use of magic – the GM must adjudicate this.

If more than two PCs fail their rolls, Yakamo will catch up and attack. The attacking force consists of Yakamo, the Kamioni, twelve Corrupted Bushi, Yasuki Nokatsu, and the remaining dog-beasts (at least two, plus any survivors from the earlier encounter). Kuni Satsujin will not be present.

If the PCs do succeed in outdistancing Yakamo, they will still be attacked just before sunset by all of the remaining dog-beasts. However, without Nokatsu to goad them on, they can easily be driven off with jade.

Conclusion

Over the next few weeks, several hundred surviving members of the Crab “rebel” faction trickle over the mountains or across the Crab borders, gradually congregating in Yasuki lands.

If the PCs successfully rescued O-Ushi’s son, they will be heroes to these tattered refugees, who see the Hida heir as hope for the future of their Clan. All of the PCs will be rewarded with gifts: spell-scrolls for shugenja PCs, and Kaiu-forged items for the other PCs.

If Hida O-Ushi herself survived, she will assume leadership of the surviving rebels, who she names the “true Crab.” She will present the gifts to the PCs personally, assuring them of her lifelong gratitude. All PCs gain Hida O-Ushi as a True Friend.

If the Jade Hand was rescued, the Crab will ask that the PCs keep possession of it. They do not want to risk letting it fall into the hands of Kisada’s “loyalists.” The party must decide which of their number will keep it (getting the cert “Bearer of the Jade Hand”).

Failure?

If the PCs were unable to save O-Ushi's son, but escaped alive, they will be shunned and reviled by all the surviving Crab rebels. Even if they saved the Jade Hand, the failure to preserve the Hida line will be a source of such bitter despair that none will credit the PCs for their efforts. Their Honor and Glory will suffer accordingly, and they lose any remaining Allies or Favors they might have with the Crab Clan. If Hiruma Imai somehow made it out with them, she will not forgive them or herself for their failure – she commits *seppuku*.

In the unlikely event that the PCs lose the combat with Yakamo's forces, but are not all immediately killed, the survivors will awaken to find themselves being taken in chains back to the Kaiu Wall. Unless they can find a way to kill themselves, they will end their careers in the Shadowlands, giving up their souls to Fu Leng.

Getting Home

Finally, assuming the PCs make it back through the Pass, they will ultimately have to arrange passage home from the Yasuki lands. If they made (and keep) political bargains with one of the “players” in Sunda Mizu Mura, this will be easy enough – the NPC who they assisted will arrange passage for them on a Mantis ship. Otherwise, they will have to pay for passage, which will cost at least 1 koku per PC.

If the PCs actually break their word to one or more of the “players,” they will have a more difficult time. In the case of Yasuki Toshinori or Daidoji Munetsu, they will still be able to buy passage out, but the cost will triple, since that NPC will be working actively against them behind their backs. If they betray Yoritomo Nokote, their only choice will be to sneak/fight past a Mantis patrol and walk out (three days to the nearest Crane city) or arrange to be smuggled out by the Yasuki or Daidoji (which requires the same arrangements, and carries the same risks, as being smuggled in).

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

At the end of the scenario, any PCs with Shadowlands Taint must make a Simple Earth roll with a TN of 5 + (5 x Taint Rank). If the roll is failed, the PC acquires one additional point of Taint.

Experience Points

Playing the adventure:	2 XP
Good role-playing:	+1 XP
PCs rescue O-Ushi's child	+1 XP
PCs rescue the Jade Hand	+1 XP
PCs slay Hida Yakamo	+1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 6 XP

Honor

Crab “rebel” PCs gain +2 Honor if they save Hida O-Ushi's son. All other PCs gain +1 Honor.

If the PCs get out without saving O-Ushi's son, all Crab PCs lose 5 points of Honor. All other PCs lose 2 points.

Glory

Crab PCs earn +2 points of Glory for saving O-Ushi's son.

Crab PCs (only) who fail to save O-Ushi's son lose a Rank (10 points) of Glory.

Other Awards/Penalties

If the PCs tried and failed to rescue O-Ushi's son, they lose all Allies and Favors with the Crab.

If the PCs rescued Hida O-Ushi's, the surviving remnants of the Crab “rebels” will offer what gratitude they can. Each shugenja PC will be given a spell-scroll (certed item), and other PCs will be offered a chance to have one of their items Kaiu-forged (certed item enhancement).

If the PCs rescued the Jade Hand, they must choose one of their number to become the “Bearer of the Jade Hand.” That PC gains the appropriate cert.

If any of the PCs were given the favor of Osano-Wo, and succeeded in saving O-Ushi's son, saving the Jade Hand, AND defeated Hida Yakamo, those PCs are marked by the favor of Osano-Wo: they gain the advantage Death Trance. If they already have Death Trance, they gain an additional 2 XP.

Appendix #1: NPCs

Hida O-Ushi, Heroic Crab Bully and Samurai-ko

FIRE 4	AIR 3
	Reflexes 4
EARTH 5	WATER 3
	Strength 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20 (30 in heavy armor)

School/Rank: Hida bushi 4

Honor/Glory: 2.6/7.5

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 5, Dai Tsuchi (specialized weapon skill) 3, Defense 5, Gambling 3, Heraldry 1, Horsemanship 3, Hunting 4, Intimidation 8, Investigation 4, Law 4, Iaijutsu 2, Jiu-jutsu (kobo) 6, Kenjutsu 4, Lore (Crab Clan) 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Stealth 2, Tsubojutsu 7, Wrestling 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Benten's Blessing, Crab Hands, Clear Thinker, Way of the Land (Crab Lands)/Bad Reputations (bully, rebel), Dependent (infant son).

Equipment: Heavy armor, daisho set, fine dai tsuchi (2k3 damage).

Hiruma Hoshiro, deceived Crab Scout

FIRE 2	AIR 3
Agility 3	
EARTH 2	WATER 2
Stamina 3	Perception 3
VOID 3	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 0.1

TN to be Hit: 15 (25 against Shadowlands creatures)

School/Rank: Hiruma Scout 2

Rank One: Dance the Razor's Edge. Add 5 per School Rank to TN to be Hit by Shadowlands creatures.

Rank Two: Run Like the Wind. Can run at 10mph for a number of hours equal to Stamina x 2.

Honor/Glory: 2.4/1.3

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 2, Hunting 3, Jiu-jutsu (kobo) 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Stealth 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Quick/Gullible.

Hiruma Imai, female Crab Scout

FIRE 3	AIR 3
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Agility 4	Reflexes 4
EARTH 3	WATER 3
Willpower 4	Perception 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20 (35 against Shadowlands creatures)

School/Rank: Hiruma Scout 3

Rank One: Dance the Razor's Edge. Add 5 per School Rank to TN to be Hit by Shadowlands creatures.

Rank Two: Run Like the Wind. Can run at 10mph for a number of hours equal to Stamina x 2.

Rank Three: Smell the Dark Lord's Touch. Cannot get lost in the Shadowlands, and can sense the Taint in creatures within 30 feet.

Honor/Glory: 2.4/1.6

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 4, Hunting 3, Jiu-jutsu (kobo) 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 6, Ratling Speech 3, Stealth 6.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Precise Memory, Ratling Ally (Black Tail)/Antisocial, Bad Reputation (woman in the scouts), Driven (to destroy Shadowlands), Haunted (brother).

Typical Hida Bushi

FIRE 2	AIR 2
Agility 3	Reflexes 3
EARTH 3	WATER 2
	Strength 3
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 15 (25 with heavy armor)

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 1.5/1.0

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, Iaijutsu 1, Jiu-jutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Stealth 1, Tsubojutsu 4, Wrestling 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth (rank 2)/Brash.

Equipment: Kimono, heavy armor, daisho set, tetsubo, yari, bow with 20 arrows.

Typical Mantis Troops

FIRE 2	AIR 3
Agility 3	

EARTH 2 Willpower 3	WATER 2 Strength 3
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Mantis Bushi 1

Rank One: May use peasant weapons as High Skills. Ignore penalties for unstable footing. May use and unskilled weapon as though they have Skill Rank 1.

Honor/Glory: 1.3/0.8

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 1, Commerce 2, Hunting 2, Investigation 2, Jiujutsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Nofujutsu 3, Sailing 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: None.

Equipment: Light armor, kimono, daisho set, kama (0k2).

Mantis Patrol Leader

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 3	WATER 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Mantis Bushi 3

Rank One: May use peasant weapons as High Skills. Ignore penalties for unstable footing. May use and unskilled weapon as though they have Skill Rank 1.

Rank Two: May spend a Void point during a Full Attack to take no To Hit penalty from the Full Attack.

Rank Three: If fighting with a medium-sized or smaller weapon in both hands, may roll separate Initiative for each, and gets one attack with each every round. If Ambidextrous, both attacks use the higher Initiative roll.

Honor/Glory: 1.4/2.5

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 2, Commerce 3, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Heraldry 2, Hunting 2, Investigation 3, Jiujutsu 4, Kenjutsu 4, Nofujutsu 5, Sailing 6, Sincerity 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Ambidextrous

Equipment: Light armor, kimono, daisho set, pair of kama (0k2).

Fallen Stars Bandit

FIRE 1	AIR 1
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Agility 2	Reflexes 2
EARTH 2	WATER 2
VOID 1	

TN to be Hit: 10 (15 with light armor)

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 0/0

Skills: Athletics 2, Hunting 3, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu (archery) 3, Nofujutsu 2, Stealth 3, Tanto 2, Wrestling 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (bandit), Social Disadvantage (ronin/bandit)

Equipment: Light armor, katana. Half of them also have a bow and 10 arrows.

Choto, Fallen Stars Leader

FIRE 3	AIR 2 Reflexes 3
EARTH 3	WATER 2 Perception 3
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 15 (20 with light armor)

School/Rank: None (true ronin)

Honor/Glory: 0.7/0.5

Skills: Athletics 4, Defense 2, Intimidation 4, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Wrestling 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Clear Thinker, Crafty, Strength of the Earth (rank one)/Bad Reputation (bandit), Social Disadvantage (ronin).

Equipment: Light armor, daisho set.

Appendix #2: Villains (Low-End)

Hida Yakamo, Fallen Crab Thunder

FIRE 3 Agility 4	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
EARTH 6	WATER 3 Strength 4

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 5.6

TN to be Hit: 20 (30 in heavy armor)

School/Rank: Hida bushi 3

Honor/Glory: 0/7.5

Wounds: 60: +5; 74: +10; 102: Down (or Dead, if Yakamo no Kamioni has been destroyed).

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 4, Hunting 3, Defense 5, Iaijutsu 2, Intimidation 4, Jiu-jutsu (kobo) 5, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 5, Tetsubo (specialized weapon skill) 3, Tsubojutsu 5, Wrestling 5.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Crab Hands, Large, Magic Resistance (rank 2, due to link with Kamioni), Strength of the Earth (rank 2)/Forsaken, Tainted.

Special Abilities: Due to his connection with the Yakamo no Kamioni, Yakamo regenerates 6 Wounds per round as long as the Kamioni is alive.

Equipment: Heavy armor, daisho set, tetsubo.

Yakamo no Kamioni, Demon of Merged Souls

FIRE 1 Agility 3	AIR 1 Reflexes 3
EARTH 1 Willpower 4	WATER 1 Perception 2

TN to be Hit: 25 (15 if the PCs can find a way to circumvent its pseudo-invisibility)

Attacks: 4k3 touch, ignores armor

Damage: 4k2 (the Kamioni's fingers pass directly into the target, burning flesh like acid)

School Rank: Shadowlands 3

Wounds: 60: Dead.

Special Abilities: The Yakamo no Kamioni can pass through solid matter up to five feet thick, but cannot move more than thirty feet away from Hida Yakamo.

It has **Special Invulnerability**: it takes no damage from any weapon which is not imbued with one of the three sacred substances (jade, crystal, or

obsidian), and only half damage from spells except for jade magic.

Yasuki Nokatsu, Corrupted Crab beast-wrangler

FIRE 3	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
EARTH 4	WATER 2 Strength 3
VOID 1	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 2.3

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Yasuki Taskmaster 2

Rank One: May roll an extra die on any attack or Intimidation attempt against an opponent with lower Willpower.

Rank Two: As an action, may activate Taking the Gift, which then remains active until he takes another action. While it is active, if he is hit in melee, he immediately and automatically hits that opponent back. His damage from this attack cannot be less than what was inflicted on him.

Honor/Glory: 0/1.3

Skills: Athletics 3, Intimidation 4, Jiu-jutsu (kobo) 3, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Tsubojutsu 3, Wrestling 3, Whip 4

Advantages/Disadvantages: Large/Tainted

Shadowlands Gift: Nokatsu has an unnatural affinity for Shadowlands beasts, and can bend them to his will.

Equipment: Hakama pants, daisho set, whip (0k1).

Shadowlands Dog-Beasts

FIRE 1 Agility 3	AIR 2 Reflexes 3
EARTH 3	WATER 2 Strength 3

TN to be Hit: 15

Attacks: 4k3 (bite)

Damage: 3k3

Carapace Armor: 5

School Rank: Shadowlands 1

Wounds: 15: +5; 35: +10; 50: Dead.

Special Abilities: Partial Invulnerability (take half damage from all attacks except from jade, crystal, obsidian, and magic).

Corrupted Hida Bushi

FIRE 1 Agility 3	AIR 2
EARTH 3	WATER 2 Strength 3
VOID 1	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 2.6

TN to be Hit: 10 (20 with heavy armor)

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 0/1.0

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 3, Defense 3, Iaijutsu 1, Jujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Tsubojutsu 4, Wrestling 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: None.

Equipment: Heavy armor, daisho set, tetsubo.

Kuni Satsujin, Corrupted Shugenja

FIRE 3	AIR 2
EARTH 4	WATER 3
VOID 3	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 3.7

TN to be Hit: 10 (15 with light armor)

School/Rank: Kuni shugenja 2

Honor/Glory: 0/2.3

Skills: Athletics 2, Calligraphy 2, Defense 3, Hand-to-Hand 2, Kenjutsu 2, Lore (Maho) 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Medicine 3, Meditation 3, Spellcraft 3, Tantojutsu 3.

Spells: *Sense, Commune, Summon*, (Earth 1) *Know the Ground, Jade Strike, Tetsubo of Earth*, (Earth 2) *Armor of Earth, Tremor*, (Fire 1) *Fury of Osano-Wo*, (Water 1) *Castle of Water*, (Maho 1) *Legacy of the Dark One*, (Maho 2) *Mists of Fear*, (Maho 3) *Corruption of the Earth*.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Innate Abilitis (all maho spells, *Know the Ground*), Strength of the Earth (rank 1)/Bad Reputation (creepy).

Shadowlands Power: Corrupted Blood (all normal spells are fulfilled by evil spirits, and may cast “normal” spells like maho if spell-slots are exhausted).

Equipment: Kimono, light armor, wakizashi, tanto, scroll satchel.

“Hiruma Hitaka”/Kuni Tsukute, Corrupted Shugenja

FIRE 3	AIR 2 Reflexes 3
EARTH 3	WATER 2 Perception 3
VOID 2	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 2.4

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Kuni shugenja 2

Honor/Glory: 0.5/1.6

Skills: Athletics 2, Calligraphy 2, Defense 3, Hand-to-Hand 2, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Maho) 4, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Meditation 2, Seduction 3, Sincerity 4, Spellcraft 3.

Spells: *Sense, Commune, Summon*, (Earth 1) *Earth’s Stagnation, Fires From the Forge, Jade Strike* (Earth 2) *Hands of Clay*, (Fire 1) *Extinguish, Katana of Fire*, (Water 1) *Reversal of Fortunes*, (Maho 1) *Pain*, (Maho 2) *The Caress of Fu Leng*, (Maho 3) *Pekkle’s Visage*.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Dangerous Beauty, Innate Abilities (all three maho spells, Earth’s Stagnation)/Dark Secret (student of Kuni Yori), Tainted.

Shadowlands Powers: *Blood Domination* (can make a Contested Willpower to control anyone who has ingested his blood – the control lasts for a number of hours equal to his Taint rank), *Darkness Unseen* (Taint is difficult to detect, +15 to the TN to be sensed by witch-hunters and Moto bushi), *Unholy Beauty* (all taint symptoms are mental, not physical).

Equipment: Traveling clothes, wakizashi, scroll satchel

Appendix #3: Villains (High-End)

Hida Yakamo, Fallen Crab Thunder

FIRE 4 Agility 5	AIR 4 Reflexes 5
EARTH 7	WATER 4 Strength 5

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 5.6

TN to be Hit: 25 (35 with heavy armor)

School/Rank: Hida bushi 4

Honor/Glory: 0/7.5

Wounds: 88: +5; 102: +10; 130: Down (or Dead, if Yakamo no Kamioni has been destroyed).

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 4, Hunting 3, Defense 5, Iaijutsu 2, Intimidation 4, Jujutsu (kobo) 5, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 5, Tetsubo (specialized weapon skill) 4, Tsubojutsu 7, Wrestling 6.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Crab Hands, Large, Magic Resistance (rank 3, due to link with Kamioni), Strength of the Earth (rank 2)/Forsaken, Tainted.

Shadowlands Gifts: *Greater Blessing of the Dark One* (+2 Wounds per Rank), *Unholy Stamina* (does not need rest or sleep).

Special Abilities: Due to his connection with the Yakamo no Kamioni, Yakamo regenerates 10 Wounds per round until the Kamioni is destroyed..

Equipment: Heavy armor, daisho set, fine tetsubo (2k3 damage).

Yakamo no Kamioni, Demon of Merged Souls

FIRE 1 Agility 4	AIR 1 Reflexes 5
EARTH 1 Willpower 5	WATER 1 Perception 3

TN to be Hit: 35 (25 if the PCs can circumvent its pseudo-invisibility)

Attacks: 5k4 touch, ignores armor

Damage: 4k3 (the Kamioni's fingers pass directly into the target, burning flesh like acid)

School Rank: Shadowlands 4

Wounds: 75: Dead.

Special Abilities: The Yakamo no Kamioni can pass through solid matter up to five feet thick, but cannot move more than thirty feet away from Hida Yakamo. It has *Special Invulnerability*: it takes no damage

from any weapon or spell which is not imbued with one of the three sacred substances (jade, crystal, or obsidian), and only half damage from jade. If it is hit with a spell to which it is immune (such as a Fire spell), it can make a **Contested Willpower** roll against the caster to reflect the spell back at him/her.

Yasuki Nokatsu, Corrupted Crab beast-wrangler

FIRE 3 Agility 4	AIR 4 Reflexes 5
EARTH 4 Willpower 5	WATER 3 Strength 4
VOID 1	

[Wounds are at +2 per rank due to Shadowlands power]

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 2.3

TN to be Hit: 25

School/Rank: Yasuki Taskmaster 3

Rank One: May roll an extra die on any attack or Intimidation attempt against an opponent with lower Willpower.

Rank Two: As an action, may activate Taking the Gift, which then remains active until he takes another action. While it is active, if he is hit in melee, he immediately and automatically hits that opponent back. His damage from this attack cannot be less than what was inflicted on him.

Rank Three: May taunt or insult an opponent and make a Contested Intimidation/Willpower roll with that target. If successful, may add the amount by which the roll succeeded to an attack roll against that target next round.

Honor/Glory: 0/1.6

Skills: Athletics 3, Intimidation 6, Jujutsu (kobo) 4, Kenjutsu 5, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Tsubojutsu 3, Wrestling 3, Whip 5

Advantages/Disadvantages: Large/Tainted

Shadowlands Gift: Nokatsu has an unnatural affinity for Shadowlands beasts, and can bend them to his will. He also has the **Greater Gift of the Dark One** (+2 Wounds per rank).

Equipment: Hakama pants, daisho set, barbed whip (0k2).

Shadowlands Dog-Beasts

FIRE 2 Agility 4	AIR 2 Reflexes 4
EARTH 3	WATER 3

TN to be Hit: 20

Attacks: 5k4 (bite)

Damage: 4k3

Carapace Armor: 7

School Rank: Shadowlands 1

Wounds: 25: +5; 45: +10; 65: Dead.

Special Abilities: Invulnerability (take no damage except from jade, crystal, obsidian, and magic).

Corrupted Hida Bushi

FIRE 1 Agility 3	AIR 2 Reflexes 4
EARTH 4	WATER 2 Strength 4
VOID 1	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 2.6

TN to be Hit: 20 (30 with heavy armor)

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 0/1.3

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 3, Defense 4, Iaijutsu 1, Jiu-jutsu 3, Kenjutsu 5, Tsubojutsu 5, Wrestling 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth (rank 1).

Equipment: Heavy armor, daisho set, tetsubo.

Kuni Satsujin, Corrupted Shugenja (High-End Version)

FIRE 4	AIR 2
EARTH 5	WATER 3
VOID 3	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 3.7

TN to be Hit: 10 (15 with light armor)

School/Rank: Kuni shugenja 4

Honor/Glory: 0/2.3

Skills: Athletics 2, Calligraphy 2, Defense 3, Hand-to-Hand 2, Kenjutsu 2, Lore (Maho) 4, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Medicine 3, Meditation 3, Spellcraft 3, Tantojutsu 3.

Spells: *Sense, Commune, Summon*, (Earth 1) *Know the Ground, Jade Strike, Tetsubo of Earth*, (Earth 2)

Armor of Earth, Tremor, (Earth 4) *Shatter*, (Earth 5) *Divide Into Ash*, (Fire 1) *Fury of Osano-Wo*, (Water 1) *Castle of Water*, (Maho 1) *Legacy of the Dark One*, (Maho 2) *Mists of Fear*, (Maho 3) *Corruption of the Earth*.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Innate Abilitis (all maho spells, Know the Ground), Strength of the Earth (rank 1)/Bad Reputation (creepy).

Shadowlands Power: Corrupted Blood (all normal spells are fulfilled by evil spirits, and may cast “normal” spells like maho if spell-slots are exhausted)

Equipment: Kimono, light armor, wakizashi, tanto, scroll satchel.

“Hiruma Hitaka”/Kuni Tsukute, Corrupted Shugenja (High-End Version)

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 4	WATER 3
VOID 2	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 2.4

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Kuni shugenja 2

Honor/Glory: 0.5/1.6

Skills: Athletics 2, Calligraphy 2, Defense 3, Hand-to-Hand 2, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Maho) 4, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Meditation 2, Seduction 3, Sincerity 5, Spellcraft 3.

Spells: *Sense, Commune, Summon*, (Earth 1) *Earth’s Stagnation, Fires From the Forge, Jade Strike*, (Earth 2) *Hands of Clay*, (Fire 1) *Extinguish, Katana of Fire*, (Water 1) *Heart of Nature, Reversal of Fortunes*, (Maho 1) *Pain*, (Maho 2) *The Caress of Fu Leng*, (Maho 3) *Pekkle’s Visage*.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Dangerous Beauty, Innate Abilities (all three maho spells, Earth’s Stagnation)/Dark Secret (student of Kuni Yori), Tainted.

Shadowlands Powers: **Blood Domination** (can make a Contested Willpower to control anyone who has ingested his blood – the control lasts for a number of hours equal to his Taint rank), **Darkness Unseen** (Taint is difficult to detect, +15 to the TN to be sensed by witch-hunters and Moto bushi), **Unholy Beauty** (all taint symptoms are mental, not physical).
Equipment: Traveling clothes, wakizashi, scroll satchel.

Appendix #4: Maho Spells

Maho spells are cast by rolling dice equal to the caster's skill in **Lore: Maho**, and keeping dice equal to the caster's **Earth** ring. The TN to cast the spell is equal to (5 x Mastery Rank) and the caster must spill Wounds in blood (their own or another's) equal to twice the spell's Mastery level. The caster gains a number of points of Taint equal to the difference between the TN and the actual roll.

Casting time is equal to the spell's Mastery level in rounds. This can be reduced with Raises, just like normal magic.

Casters may take Free Raises for each additional amount of blood (equal to twice the Mastery level) which they spill.

Caress of Fu Leng

Mastery Level: 2

Duration: Instant

Raises: Casting Time

Effect: This spell causes all jade on the chosen target to blacken and corrupt, losing all its potency and reducing it to a foul black sludge. Alternatively, it can target a single jade item.

Corruption of the Earth

Mastery Level: 3

Duration: 4 rounds

Raises: Area (3 feet diameter per raise), Casting Time, Duration (4 more rounds per raise)

Effect: This spell causes the earth within three feet of the target to turn to mud and swallow them up at the rate of two feet per Action. PCs trying to escape must roll **Simple Earth** at TN 15 to move three feet. Each attempt to move (whether successful or not) requires a **Simple Water** roll at TN 10 to avoid sinking an additional foot into the mud. Pulling free of the mud requires a **Simple Earth** roll at a TN of 5 times the number of feet the victim has sunk into the mud.

Legacy of the Dark One

Mastery Rank: 1

Duration: 10 Rounds

Raises: Increased penalty (one Rank per two Raises)

Effect: The caster calls on the Dark Lord's power to obfuscate the target's relationship with the universe itself. For the duration of the spell, the target's Void Ring is considered to be one Rank lower.

Mists of Fear

Mastery Rank: 2

Duration: 5 Rounds

Raises: Casting Time, Duration (5 rounds per Raise)

Effect: The caster can summon an image of that which his target fears most (usually a person or thing associated with that fear). To the target, the caster appears as this person or object. This will activate

any Phobia disadvantages, and gives the caster a Fear rating of 3 for the duration of the spell.

Pain

Mastery Level: 1

Duration: 1 Round

Raises: Duration (1 round per raise), Number of Targets (one per raise)

Effect: The target (who must be visible and within 25 feet) is suddenly wracked with terrible, debilitating pain. The victim may not act for the duration of the spell. Further, victims of this spell must roll Simple Earth at TN 15 or cry out in agony, dishonoring themselves.

Pekkle's Visage

Mastery Level: 3

Duration: 1 hour

Raises: Casting Time, Duration (1 hour per raise)

Effect: This spell causes all signs of the caster's Taint to recede and vanish for the duration of the spell, making it impossible to detect. While the spell is in effect, the caster may not use maho, except to re-cast or reverse-cast ("turn off") *Pekkle's Visage* itself.

Appendix #5: Fate of Smugglers

If the PCs decide to enlist the Daidoji or Yasuki to smuggle them into Sunda Mizu Mura, they will be taken aboard a small, fast kobune whose hold is packed with illicit goods. The ship has a crew of seven. The PCs are squeezed into a small open space in the hold, and ordered to stay below until the trip is over.

The PCs will spend two uncomfortable days in the hold, suffering through stifling heat and heavy air that reeks with the odors of shipboard life. The crew Late on the second day, any PC who rolls Simple Perception at TN 15 will notice that something has changed – steps hurry back and forth on the deck overhead, voices are raised in anger and panic, and so forth. This goes on for some time – the ship has been spotted by a Mantis patrol vessel, and is trying to make a run for it.

Eventually the ship will be stopped and boarded, and a battle will erupt on the deck overhead. If the PCs stay where they are, they will eventually be located by Mantis sailors searching the ship – they will have to fight, either now or later, unless they can come up with a story that will convince the Mantis to set them free (highly unlikely).

The Mantis ship has a total crew of fourteen, plus the captain (statistically equivalent to the “Typical Mantis Troops” and “Mantis Patrol Leader” in the NPC section).

- If the PCs act while the combat is still underway, eight of the Mantis crew will be occupied with fighting the crew of the smuggling ship.
- Each round, the crew will lose one of their own number. Every two rounds, they manage to kill one of the Mantis.
- If the PCs wait to fight until after the crew has been defeated, they will be facing 10 Mantis sailors (four were killed fighting the crew), plus the captain.

If the PCs win, they will still face the problem of guiding the ship into shore. As long as there is at least one surviving crew member, the ship can still be sailed if there are PCs willing to serve as “fill-in” crew. If all the crew are dead, at least one PC will have to be able to roll **Sailing/Intelligence** at TN 20 – otherwise, they will be lost at sea. If all of the PCs can roll **Simple Void** at TN 20, a passing ship will find them – they can roll once per day.

GM's Aid #1: Map of Shiro Yasuki Yoro

